

# THE END of DREAMS



WOOD LEVETTE WILSON





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WHAT A DREAM! THE WORST YET!



# THE END OF DREAMS

BY  
WOOD LEVETTE WILSON



*Illustrations by A. G. Learned*



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*To that unknown quantity in life which is  
always interesting, and sometimes fearsome.*







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*The End of Dreams*



*Outward things are not in my power; to will is in my power. Where shall I seek the Good, and where the Evil? Within me—in all that is my own.*

—EPICTETUS.





## CHAPTER I

### WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

**B**EATRICE COLLAMER awakened suddenly and thoroughly. She was not startled, nor had she any sense of fear, and yet she felt that something unusual was occurring. Darkness surrounded her, and she had no conception of the time. It might be anywhere between eleven o'clock and dawn; though it seemed as if she had slept several hours.



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The sound of measured breathing coming through the open door from the next room told her that her mother still slumbered peacefully. From the street occasionally came the usual and undisturbing night noises of a quiet neighborhood, and from beyond, the subdued roar that passes in a city for silence.

For several moments she lay and listened, but there was no other sound. The possibility of burglars she quickly dismissed; one does not have much fear of burglars on the eighth floor of a well-filled apartment house.

Still she lay and listened, with no inclination to go to sleep again, unsatisfied and curious. And with the waiting came a desire to know the hour. She would go to the dining room where she could see the clock, and also get a drink of water.



## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

Quietly she rose, so as not to disturb her mother, and, thrusting her feet into soft bedroom slippers and slipping on a dressing gown, stepped into the hallway. The faint light of the night, coming through the windows, dimly located the walls and doors, and outlined the furniture in uncertain masses, and she was able to make her way noiselessly and expeditiously.

As she paused at the dining room door, she thought she heard a slight noise as if some one had moved. Then her hand found the electric switch, and the room was flooded with light. For a second or two the glare blinded her; then she gasped, and caught at the door jamb.

Standing by the sideboard, with a bundle in his hand, was a man, tall and well-built, and wearing a black mask!



## THE END OF DREAMS

With a growl he turned as if he would throttle her and prevent the scream he expected. Then he caught himself and, giving a smothered, half-articulate cry, stood for a moment as if petrified with astonishment.

“Beatie!” he exclaimed, “*You!* Beatie!”

Her breath almost stopped, and her heart seemed to rise up and choke her. Not in ten years had anyone called her by that name. And the voice! Her pulse raced, and her brain was in a whirl. Memories, doubts, fears—

He recovered himself first. Tossing the bundle on the table, where it fell with a chink which told that its contents were such scant loot as the Collamer flat afforded, he sprang to the open door of the pantry. There he paused momentarily, and turned once more toward her.





AS HE SPOKE HIS MASK DROPPED FROM HIS FACE.







## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

“Forget!” he exclaimed, in a low, tense voice.

As he spoke the fastening of his mask gave way, and it dropped from his face.

In Beatrice’s eyes shone the horror of confirmed, yet almost unbelievable, suspicions.

“Demas!” she screamed.

With an oath, which she did not hear because she had crumpled down senseless in the doorway, he jumped to the open window of the pantry, climbed out on the fire escape, and was gone.

The first thing that Beatrice realized, as she gradually came to her senses, was that she was in bed, and that there was a rumble of voices near by. Then from the confusion of sounds came words that she distinguished.



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“—not the slightest cause for alarm, Mrs. Collamer,” a voice was saying—a voice that sounded like Dr. Runciman’s, making her wonder why he was there. “Merely a fainting fit which was quite the natural effect of the adventure—if we may judge by the evidences of a visit in the dining room. Miss Beatrice evidently came upon the intruder unexpectedly to both of them. Then she screamed and fainted, and he, seeing how he had disturbed a lady, quickly withdrew in a very gentlemanly way down the fire escape.”

She opened her eyes and saw the doctor standing at the bedside, with unkempt hair and beard awry as if he had hurriedly responded, from his apartments on a lower floor, to an emergency call. Near by stood her mother working her hands together nervously. It



## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

was not yet morning, and under the glare of the incandescents Mrs. Collamer looked ghastly and scared. Beatrice took a long breath.

"Yes," she said a little weakly, "that was the way, Doctor."

"Ah!" exclaimed the doctor, stooping and resting his fingers on the wrist that lay so inert on the bed. "All right again, eh? No," he interrupted himself, as Beatrice made a movement to sit up, "not yet. Your pulse does not quite meet with my approval."

As her functions resumed their normal activity, her strength returned rapidly; and with this strength came the remembrance of the meeting in the dining room.

"Oh!" she cried, softly, as a shudder shook her body, and she covered her eyes with her hands.



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Her mother knelt quickly at her bedside.

"Don't be frightened, Beatrice, dear," she said. "He's gone now. He was only a burglar."

"Only—a burglar!" she repeated, bringing out the last word, after a pause, slowly and reluctantly, while her eyes looked beyond her mother, and into the past when she had seen that unmasked face so often, and when she had so gladly welcomed its appearance every day.

"Yes, dear," her mother was saying; "and we have sent for the police. They're likely to be here any moment now."

"The police?" A frightened look came into her eyes as she spoke, and her nerves were tense. "How—how long since—" She paused.



## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

“Since your adventure?” said the doctor, looking at his watch. “Um-m-m, nearly an hour, I should say.”

She relaxed again, and her eyes became calmer. Much might have been done in an hour.

“And now,” went on the doctor, “as you seem to be all right again, I think I’ll return to my hard-earned rest—”

“Oh, yes, Doctor, of course. I’m all right. It was too bad to disturb you. I’ll never forgive myself for being so foolish as to faint like that—”

“Tut, tut! It seems that I don’t dare to joke. Of course you should have called me. Indeed, I should not have thought so highly of you if you had not fainted in a thoroughly womanly manner, under the circumstances. But you did, fortunately. And now I’ll say good—well, yes, good-morning.



## THE END OF DREAMS

I'll step in again, and see how you are getting along when I get up."

"Try to sleep a little, Beatrice," said Mrs. Collamer, when Doctor Runciman had gone, "so you will be thoroughly composed, and can tell the police all about it when they come. I'll turn out the light, and lie down on the couch in the other room. Doctor Runciman will tell the other people in the building that everything is all right."

Beatrice nodded slightly and closed her eyes, but she did not sleep. Still she heard that voice, and saw that unmasked face—the same, and yet so different from what it had been ten years before. Could it be— She tried to disbelieve her own eyes and ears, and yet—

Twenty minutes later the bell sounded, and she heard her mother admit some one whose voice was deeply



## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

masculine. Nearly an hour and a half, she thought, and it would be at least another half hour before the police were ready to take the trail.

Adam Holtsclaw, plain clothes man, who represented one branch of the city's efforts to prevent and to discover crime, did not look the part. His hair and eyes were light, and his face was almost as rosy and pudgy as an infant's, while his girth suggested sedentary rather than active pursuits. Yet he went over the flat with quick, shrewd glances that took in all details. The case was entirely clear to him. The burglar had mounted the fire escape, entered the pantry window and gathered up such loot as was convenient. Then, when he was interrupted, he had escaped the way he entered.

"I'll talk to the young lady now, if you please, mum," he said, finally.



## THE END OF DREAMS

It was Detective Holtsclaw's boast that any person he met professionally he would always know at subsequent meetings, no matter when or where they occurred. Thus the light eyes were keen and critical when Beatrice entered wearing the same dressing gown she had on when the adventure occurred. They saw a woman of twenty-eight, not tall, yet seeming so from her slenderness and grace, with big grey eyes, and soft hair of a dusky brown that approached black, now coiled in hurried and careless masses about her head.

At the detective's request, she related the incidents from the time she awakened until she had fainted.

"Would you know the burglar if you saw him again?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, reluctantly, after a pause.



## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

“Um-m-m,” said the detective, as he eyed her sharply. “Did he do anything in particular to make you scream?”

“N-o.”

“Um-m-m; and you didn’t scream until his mask fell off?”

“No-o-o.” Her reluctance increased appreciably.

The detective turned his eyes full on hers.

“Had you ever seen him before?” he asked.

She seemed to be thinking, and did not answer.

“Had you ever seen him before?” he repeated, not unkindly, but insistently.

“Yes—I think so,” she admitted.

“Why, Beatrice!” exclaimed Mrs. Collamer.



## THE END OF DREAMS

"One minute, lady," said the detective, interrupting what might have been a flow of exclamations. "Jist a little ca'mness now; we seem to be gittin' a start. How long," he asked, turning once more to Beatrice, "since you had seen him before?"

"Oh," her tone was low, but full of protest, "ten years—or more."

"Where?"

"We went to the same college."

"Um-m-m," said the detective, sagely; "and what was his name—then?"

Her voice sank even lower.

"I won't tell you," she said.

"Why, Beatrice, child!" Mrs. Collamer's voice rose in a shocked tone. "What do you mean? What is the matter with you? You must tell. It is the law. Who was he?"



## WHEN THE MASK SLIPPED

The girl raised her face, bitter with doubt and trouble, and her chin trembled.

“ I— ” Then burying her face in the broad upholstered side of the chair, she wound her arms about her head, as if to shut out everything, and sobbed.

Mrs. Collamer knelt at her side with soothing words of comfort and encouragement, while the detective cleared his throat and stroked his shaven chin. He was not a hard-hearted man, but duty was duty, so he held his place, silently waiting for the storm of emotion to pass, while he pictured to his own satisfaction something of the past. He could not believe, however, that a mere boy and girl affair like that could have been very serious, especially when they had not met in ten years, and the young man had manifestly become so impossi-



## THE END OF DREAMS

ble. His voice was softer than usual when he spoke.

“You’d better tell me, Miss,” he said, “both for your own sake an’ his’n. If he’s jist gittin’ started wrong maybe we can give him a right steer, an’ if he’s all to the bad—well, you can’t do him no harm, an’ you may do other people lots o’ good. It’ll be better either way, an’ all ’round. Come on, now, what was his name?”

Pushing her mother away from her, Beatrice rose and walked to the door of her own room. There she turned toward the detective with her face set, the corners of her mouth drawn down, and the tears of bitterness ready to overflow.

“Demas Dayre,” she said, as she stepped into the other room, and closed the door behind her.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ARREST

WHEN word came that the local police, at the behest of a detective from another city, had arrested Demas Dayre on a charge of burglary, the half dozen men who were sitting around the big fireplace, with its smouldering April evening fire, at the Sycamore club, stared at each other aghast. But only for a moment. Then they pounded their knees with their fists and laughed immoderately. The joke was unquestionably on Dayre.

“It would make it seem a whole lot more real if we’d leave him in all night,” said Boyd Lenroot: “but that would come pretty near being mean.”



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“You bet!” exclaimed Nace Forbush. “The inside of a jail is no joke, even if there’s no scare about it. It’s up to us to get him out; then he can come back with us, and throw a little party for us to show his gratitude. Come on, everybody, and we’ll pick up some of the other fellows on the way there.”

So it was that half an hour later two touring cars stopped their chugging behind Forbush’s electric runabout in front of the police station, and eleven men, representing enough social, political, commercial and financial influence to go on the bond of any man charged with anything less than cold-blooded murder, climbed out and went to the rescue of Demas Dayre.

The desk sergeant’s room was not a wholly unpleasant or uncheerful place



## THE ARREST

with its ample supply of incandescents and its neutral tinted walls between it and the distress that was confined behind them. At the desk the sergeant sat in his blue and brass, busy with the routine of the night. In a far corner sat Demas and the visiting detective, who was smoking one of Demas's cigars, and keeping an incidental watch over the prisoner.

Demas really looked the part of the daring man of action better than the detective except as to the eyes, which were large and dark brown and mild, and spoke only of kindliness and humanity. Otherwise he filled the requirements well. He was tall and slender, but muscular, with a rather sallow, beardless face, and hair some shades darker than straw color, which grew high on his forehead almost to the line



## THE END OF DREAMS

of incipient baldness, altogether not very accurately defining his thirty-three years. At a look one might have guessed him twenty-five; at another, over forty.

The general appearance and the confident manner of the company that came, the greetings that were exchanged, and the evident attitude of respect on the part of the desk sergeant, impressed the detective to a degree that effaced official arrogance. Forbush assumed the responsibilities of the occasion.

"Good evening, Mr. —" Forbush hesitated, politely.

"Holtsclaw," responded the detective. "Adam Holtsclaw, sir, at your service." The detective was not to be outdone in politeness.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Holtsclaw,"



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said Forbush, shaking hands—affability always being effective under such circumstances. “We are all”—Forbush, with a wave of his hand, included the other ten unquestionably innocent bystanders—“sure that some mistake has been made. Perhaps, if you are under no official restrictions, Mr. Holtsclaw, you would be willing to tell us about the case.”

“Sure!” agreed Mr. Holtsclaw, with his geniality expanding under the vivifying air of goodfellowship. “The whole thing up to yet is on the records for anybody to read that wants to. It was a good job, an’ the man who done it”—a graceful concession to the prisoner’s possible innocence—“wasn’t no slouch either in nerve nor at his trade. But he made one mistake. You see it was this way. He chucks a rope over



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the lower end o' the fire escape in the court o' the Mirador flats, climbs up it—hand over hand, I reckon; then climbs the fire escape to the pantry window o' Mrs. Collamer's flat on the eighth floor."

"Mrs. Collamer?" exclaimed Demas, who was also hearing the details for the first time.

"Yes, Widow; lives with her grown daughter—um-m-m, le's see—what was her name—um-m-m—Dor'thy—naw, that wasn't it—um-m-m—"

"Beatrice," suggested Demas, with something very close to emotion in his voice.

A gleam of triumph lighted the detective's eyes at the success of his simple ruse.

"Sure!" he exclaimed. "That's it! Maybe you knew 'em before?"



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“I used to know Miss Collamer at college,” said Demas, steadily. “Go on with the story.”

The detective spared no effort. He told the story with gusto down to its minutest detail.

“An’,” he said, in conclusion, “the whole thing was a bad break. You see you—um-m, that is, the burglar climbed one story too high. What he wanted was the flat below where a retail jew’ler lives whose wife’s got a trunkful of jew’ls. There ain’t much o’ anything in Mrs. Collamer’s flat worth stealin’, for she ain’t a bit rich.”

“Remarkable!” exclaimed Forbush, winking at Demas, who was leaning forward with the stern, set look of a man who is feeling much and striving not to show it. “And how did you manage to identify your man so you could come



## THE END OF DREAMS

straight down here and make the arrest?"

The detective's chest swelled a little in anticipation of the effect he was going to produce.

"Well, that's jist where I didn't quite finish the story. You see, when the mask fell off, Miss Collamer reco'nized the man. An' though she didn't want to give him away"—he looked knowingly at Demas—"we persuaded her it was better, so she fin'ly said it was Demas Dayre, and bolted into the other room, an' I could hear her cryin' clean through the shut door. The rest, o' course, was easy."

The others, who were watching the detective, did not notice that Demas's face had paled, and that his breath was coming rapidly.

"Good work, Mr. Holtsclaw," said



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Forbush. "It's clear enough that you know your business all right. Now, when was it that this attempted robbery occurred?"

"Last Monday night."

"Last Monday night, eh?" Forbush smiled a little.

"Well, that is, early Tuesday morning. It was not quite three o'clock when I answered that hurry-up call."

Forbush turned to the others.

"Wasn't it last Monday night," he asked, "that Kennedy gave his birthday party?"

"Sure!" came the chorus.

Again Forbush turned to the detective.

"Well, Mr. Holtsclaw, this either complicates the situation a good deal, or simplifies it immensely. I and all my friends here, as well as some others we



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can produce if desired, will be quite willing to testify that Mr. Dayre was at the table with us, at the Sycamore club, from ten o'clock Monday night until about three o'clock Tuesday morning when the party broke up. After that I walked up to the third floor of the club and saw Mr. Dayre go into his bedroom. The next morning I breakfasted with him at half past ten. So you see that it is manifestly impossible that he should have been within two hundred miles of Mrs. Collamer's flat at the time the robbery occurred. As this is only Friday, of course the whole thing is fresh in our minds." And he slowly turned an inquiring look on the sergeant.

"I'm afraid you're to the bad, Mr. Holtsclaw," said that official, shaking his head. "Now that I recollect it, I saw



## THE ARREST

Mr. Dayre on Main street about nine o'clock Monday evening myself. After this evidence—these gentlemen are all known to me—of course you couldn't expect—" The sergeant let the tacit understanding of official courtesy finish the sentence for him.

Mr. Holtsclaw drew a long breath. He could recognize evidence when he heard it, and this was of a convincing kind.

"No," he said, reluctantly, "I s'pose not. But it gits me, I tell you, it gits me."

"Well," said Demas, drily, "I'm glad it doesn't get me."

"How do you figger it out?" The detective's manner was distressingly puzzled.

Demas shook his head.

"I'm afraid I'll have to leave that to



## THE END OF DREAMS

somebody who knows more about such things than I do," he said. "But if you want to reach me you can generally find me at the Sycamore club where I live. Or, if it will help you any, I might go back with you."

The detective shook his head dejectedly. The suspect was entirely too willing.

"No," he said; "I guess it wouldn't be no use. I'll have to git a new start. Somebody's been wearin' your mug or something like it. Maybe the girl had been thinkin' about you, an' bein' all excited, of course—Oh, well."

"And now if that's all, gentlemen," said Forbush, "we'll not interfere further with your official duties."

"I don't see nothin' more to it, Mr. Forbush," said the sergeant.

The friends of the accused trooped



## THE ARREST

out to the sidewalk, with Demas and Forbush in the rear, and loaded themselves into their cars.

"You'll have to go slow for me," said Forbush; "I'm shy of juice."

"Go slow nothing!" exclaimed Lenroot, from his wheel. "You come along the best you can with that imitation of yours, and we'll have everything ready when you get there." And the two cars were off, leaving Forbush and Demas standing on the steps of the police station.

"Sorry to have bothered you," said Detective Holtsclaw, as he passed out. "I'm off to catch the next train back, and find out about this bum steer I got."

"What's your guess on it, Demas?" asked Forbush.

Demas gazed down the electric glare



## THE END OF DREAMS

of the street after the detective who was rapidly striding away, then pushed his hat back reflectively.

“Mighty queer thing,” he replied. “Guess we’ll have to leave it to that detective to figure out. Let’s get back to the club, and—”

He stopped. A closed carriage had just driven up to the curb. From it the house detective of the Metropolitan department store emerged, and held open the door for a woman who followed. She was tall and graceful, with a rather disdainful bearing; and was richly and tastefully dressed in a dark-colored traveling suit. Over her face was a dark veil.

Without a word the two entered the police station, and Demas and Forbush, impelled by a curiosity which left them quite as silent, turned and followed.



## THE ARREST

The store detective stated his case briefly. He had arrested the woman for shoplifting. She had been seen to take a jeweled belt buckle, and he believed that she had other goods belonging to the store concealed about her, though she had indignantly denied the accusation. He wanted her searched right away, as the store was still open and crowded, and he should be back at his post.

The sergeant picked up his pen and turned to the woman.

"Your name?" he asked.

She hesitated a moment, and then tossed her head as if in defiance.

"Vashti Garwood," she answered.

"Residence?"

She did not reply.

"Residence?" he repeated.

"I'll tell you nothing more," she said.



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There was determination in her tone, and the sergeant had no time to argue with her.

“I’ll send you in to be searched,” he said. “If you want to send for somebody to go on your bond, you might get that part of the business started first, and save time.”

For the first time the woman lifted her veil. Her features were almost classic in their beauty, with large lustrous eyes of a brown that was near to black, and the deep rose-leaf cheeks of the brilliant brunette.

As she looked around, her gaze, falling on Demas, lighted for a moment with recognition which faded as rapidly as it flashed.

“No,” she said, turning again to the sergeant, “I don’t know anybody here. If you will let me go back to the



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Grand hotel where I am staying, I will get enough money for a cash bond."

"Well," said the sergeant, slowly, "I might—"

The telephone bell rang, and he turned to the instrument at his elbow as if glad of the interruption.

"Yes," he answered—"Yes; he's here.—Yes; just slated her."

The woman turned her eyes on him intently, eagerly.

"How's that?" the sergeant continued to address the transmitter.—"Oh, you found it, did you?"

The woman emitted a hardly perceptible sigh of relief as if something hoped for had happened.

"Oh, yes," the sergeant went on to the telephone, "if you say so. Huh? Don't want to take any what? Oh, chances, I see. All right; it's all off."



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He hung up the receiver, and turned to the store detective.

"The manager of the store says they've found that belt buckle, and wants us to let the woman go," he said.

The store detective looked disgusted.

"Well," he grumbled, "I s'pose— Oh, well, what's the dif? It's all a part of the job, I guess. All right."

"In that case, I suppose you have no objection to my taking the carriage back to my hotel without your company," said the woman, with frosty politeness.

"Naw," he answered, shortly.

As she turned to leave, she gave a slight bow that seemed to include everybody in the room. Once more her eyes rested for a moment on Demas, but this time without any definite expression. He met her gaze merely as an interested



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and naturally somewhat sympathetic onlooker. Then she dropped her veil again, and with erect, dignified and graceful mien, passed out of the room.

Demas and Forbush reached the door just as her carriage drove off.

"Gee! Wasn't she a peach?" exclaimed Forbush, gazing after the vehicle.

"Rather impressive," agreed Demas.

"Well, if I've got anything she wants to shoplift, all she's got to do is to say so, and I won't lock it up. But I don't believe she stole anything. Something's mixed in this business."

"I hope so for her sake," said Demas, as they climbed into the runabout. "It's no fun being arrested; I've tried it."

Forbush laughed, as he pulled the lever.



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"There does seem to be a good deal doing in police circles tonight, doesn't there?"

"More than a-plenty. It has jarred my nerves."

"Oh, cheer up! We'll be back to the club in five minutes, and the boys will have some nerve medicine for you waiting on the table."

Three or four blocks farther on Forbush spoke again.

"My guess is that she is an actress," he said. "What do you think?"

"Who?" Demas's thoughts had been far afield.

"Why, the Juno that didn't steal the belt buckle."

"Oh. Um-m-m, well, she might be. She certainly seems to possess the most important element of success in the profession."



## THE ARREST

"You bet! I'm going to see every show in town next week, and see if I can't locate her. Here we are," he added, as they pulled up at the curb.



## CHAPTER III

### THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

WHATEVER may have been the mystery of Demas Dayre's arrest, there was none about Demas Dayre himself. Left alone in the world at the age of twenty-three with a modest competence, just after finishing his college course, he had come to the city from the little town in which he was born and brought up, as many another young man has done, and, as many another young man has not done, had, by fortunate and judicious investments, increased that competence until it was something more than merely modest; more than sufficient, indeed, for



## THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

his needs, which were neither extravagant nor complex. For the first five years of his residence he had lived at the Grand hotel, and then, after having helped to found the Sycamore club, he had taken up his quarters there and had since remained. He never talked much about himself, either as to his past experiences or future hopes; but his present advantages made it clear that he was privileged to lead the idle and rather aimless life that is so much envied even when it is unexciting and harmless. Thus it was that he had every reason not only to be content, but to gather in for his own, from time to time, his full share of enjoyment.

And yet, as he sat there at the table with his eleven rescuers, wearing his habitually serene expression, he was neither happy nor contented. The jest



## THE END OF DREAMS

passed and the song rose, and Demas smiled, but he was even less talkative than usual.

“Oh, cheer up, Demas!” cried Lenroot. “All you need is a little speed. You can live it down if you live fast enough.”

“I suppose all of you would be willing to help on that system?”

“Sure!” It was a chorus.

“Ho!” exclaimed Lenroot, as a hall boy entered with a salver. “A message from the gods! Or, hold! Things are moving pretty lively to-night—perchance it is from the goddesses. What will the little gentleman have next?”

The boy, impassive from severe but correct training, presented the note to Demas. It was hotel stationery, and the superscription was in a woman’s



## THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

writing—a bold chirography that spoke of personal daring.

For a moment he hesitated, and then, a song having started at the other end of the table in that spirit which never even considers the possibility of an embarrassing pause, he opened the note and read it. As the song ended he rose.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to ask you to excuse me,” he said.

“*Ah!*” The chorused exclamation was both accusatory and congratulatory.

While waiting in the hallway for a cab, Demas read again:

DEAR DEMIE:

You’re the wonder of the age! When I asked the cab driver about you he seemed not only to know all about you—or maybe not all—but to regard you as a fixture and a prominent citizen. That’s how I know where to send



## THE END OF DREAMS

this note. Come down to the Grand, and help me kill time until the two-thirty train. I'm off. This place is too precarious for me. I'll meet you in the parlor, for everything must be eminently respectable—just as if it weren't always!

Yours,

VASHTI.

P. S.—The messenger won't wait for an answer because I'm sure you will respond to the appeal of a poor lonesome lady.

Demas sighed. There were times when he felt that something must be done; times when the burden seemed to become too heavy to be borne, and so threatening that almost anything would be a relief. This was one of those times. And yet patience with existing ills was surely better, for the present, at least, than to stir up others that could not even be guessed. Demas got into the cab.



## THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

Vashti Garwood laid down the magazine, which she had not been reading, and rose from the easy chair in the corner as Demas entered. Naturally, being a woman with a keen appreciation of herself, she had changed her costume. Now it was a dark grey traveling suit of elaborate simplicity, with a little round bonnet, which matched both it and her, crowning effectively her coils of black hair. It was far after midnight, and nobody was about, yet she spoke in a discreetly subdued tone as she came forward and extended her hand.

"I'm surely glad to see you, Demie," she said, cordially; "for, of course, you know I couldn't see you in the police station. But what's the answer?"

"There isn't any," replied Demas, accepting the cordiality, but looking her over with eyes that were not familiar.



## THE END OF DREAMS

She laughed.

"That would be talking about your occasional disappearances, wouldn't it; and you wouldn't tell anything about yourself for a million in real money, would you? Well, maybe some of these days I'll learn to quit guessing on you, and take you as you happen to come along."

"Wouldn't that be the best way?"

"Oh, I suppose so. But what are you doing here, anyhow?"

"I'm just staying here."

"Until that Collamer flat adventure blows over? That looked like pretty coarse work to me, Demie. A man ought to be able to count windows even in the dark. But at that it was foolish, just the same. You're no steeple jack, and the stake wasn't worth it even if you had gone right."



## THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

"The stake is never worth it."  
There was an earnestness about his tone that surprised her.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "In the dumps, or just a grouch?"

"Neither," he replied; "but one is bound to get tired sometimes."

She hesitated a moment thoughtfully before she answered. Then she turned her eyes full on his and Demas had to admit that they were remarkably fine eyes.

"Yes," she said, "that's right. There are lots of better ways, of course, if there was just any way to get started in some of them." Then she recovered her mood with a slight toss of her head. "Let's go down to the café, and get some oysters and something to cheer us. We need it."

It was not exactly the sort of thing



## THE END OF DREAMS

that Demas would have preferred. However, it was very late; the café was probably deserted, or nearly so, and—what was the difference, anyway?

“All right,” he said.

“That table over in the corner half behind the plants will be about it, I think,” she said, as they entered.

“I really oughtn’t to have taken that belt buckle,” she said, after the waiter had taken their order.

“No, I don’t think you ought.”

“Say, Demie, what’s the matter with you. You’re surely not losing your nerve, are you?”

“No, I was talking about you.”

“Well, anyhow, I didn’t take it. It seemed so easy and such a good joke, and besides it was so pretty, that—but then I got scared, and dropped it. So they couldn’t have done anything any-



## THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

how except stop me until somebody found it, which they were bound to do pretty soon. Still, I played pretty lucky."

"Are you always lucky?"

"Don't you know that I am? But what I want to know is what you were doing at the police station. That's no place for you to loiter."

"Why, I had some business there. Did you know that a detective from out of town had been there?" The question was thrown out for what it might discover.

"No! What was he doing there?"

"On the trail of that robbery case, I believe."

"And you at the police station! Demie, your nerve has helped you out many a time, but it's going to get you in bad some day."



## THE END OF DREAMS

"I guess I can't get in any deeper than I am now."

"No? Well, they might put the lid on you, you know." She looked at her watch. "It's time for me to go now if I'm going to catch that train." She rose, and he followed her to the door leading into the hotel lobby. "Now, look here, Demie," she went on. "You want to cheer up. Something's gone wrong with you. I don't know what it is, and you don't seem to want to tell; but forget it. You've been away on whatever kind of toot this is long enough, and you need work to interest you. Come on back to business, and help Tom and me run the establishment. We're doing fine, and business is getting better every night, and every day for that matter. Better go up on the train with me to-night. Can't you?"



## THE FAVOR OF VASHTI

"No, not to-night; I haven't quite finished here," he said, vaguely.

"Well, then come as soon as you can. It will be good for you and us, too. And if I don't see you between now and then, don't forget that small and early just for the two of us you are going to give me at Cook's on my birthday. It's next Thursday, you know. I'll meet you there at nine o'clock. Now you won't forget, will you?"

Demas glanced inquiringly at her to see if she were really in earnest. It seemed hard to believe, but she evidently was.

"I'll be there, sure," he said, positively; "and will be glad to be there."

"Now, that sounds better," she said, gaily. "And maybe there will be a little surprise for you."

"So much the better! You're talk-



## THE END OF DREAMS

ing more like yourself, now. Good-night, and good bye, and good luck."

It was a long way back to the Sycamore club, but Demas covered the whole distance on foot. The streets were almost deserted and his footsteps on the pavement sounded sharply through the stillness of the night. But he took no thought of this quiet loneliness. Far from that, he was thinking many thoughts that he had thought many times before, and some new ones; rousing many hopes that had risen and fallen before, and some others that seemed even better. The opportunity he had looked for so long was perhaps almost at hand. He would be at Cook's on Thursday night. What the result would be he could only hope among other new hopes. He hardly dared to guess.



## CHAPTER IV

### WHEN DREAMS BEGAN

**A**MONG other of his experiences that Demas Dayre did not talk about was the one that nearly ended his life, and even yet, after a lapse of eleven years, caused him serious distress. It happened when he was twenty-two, and in his last year of college. A batted ball had struck him on the side of the head, back of the ear, and he had been carried to his room unconscious. Through some oversight his people had not been notified of the accident, and afterward neither they nor any one else ever heard a word about it from Demas; so among the multitude of minor casualties in college athletics it was quickly



## THE END OF DREAMS

forgotten by those who knew about it. But not by Demas.

When one afternoon he recognized his surroundings, and was told that he had lain unconscious for six days, and part of the time near death, he stared in silent amazement. He recollected the ball game, and he understood now from the soreness of his head that he was recovering from an accident, but—six days unconscious?

It might have been six days or six months, but he could not feel that he had been unconscious. To him it seemed that during the interval he had been perversely conscious; that he had wandered far, that he had wandered in strange places, and that he had done things which pained and humiliated him now to recall; and, still worse, that he had done them with zest and enjoyment



## WHEN DREAMS BEGAN

in defiance and circumvention of authority.

As he grew better he came to regard these memories as a bad dream, a sort of mania that had resulted from the terrific jar his brain had received, and was comforted by the very thought of their impossibility.

And then—they came again! Came vividly during long hours of leaden sleep that left him far more exhausted when he awakened long after his usual hour than when he went to bed. At first these dreams were rare, but gradually the intervals between them shortened until now never a week passed but that he rose from his bed exhausted and distressed by his long stupor filled with visions of lawless and vicious actions, the very memory of which shamed him.

It was when these dreams were re-



## THE END OF DREAMS

peated often enough to give them the force of horrible realities that he began to withdraw into himself and take on more solitary habits until he had broken his association with most of his friends, and even with Beatrice Collamer, with whom a friendship so devoted had existed that college gossips talked, as college gossips will. This was not easy for him—or for her. She was mystified and hurt, but silent with the inflexible pride of youth. He was miserable and afraid—fearing for her the depths to which it seemed he must inevitably be dragged.

So when the end of his college days came the parting was without explanation, and with only scant good-byes of masked and suppressed feeling. Then began his fight with himself to maintain himself, while he hoped even to the



## WHEN DREAMS BEGAN

verge of despair for the day of his triumph and safety when he could go back to her with the whole heartbreaking story and say "All is well."

But the dreams continued to come, oftener, vividder and more distressingly, and even now after all the years that had passed, hope seemed as faint or fainter than ever. There was nothing to get hold of, nothing he could combat tangibly, and everything to fear.

It was after one of these nights of horror that the arrest had come, bringing, of course, something of a shock, but not complete surprise. Rather it came as something long deferred, but inevitable; and Demas, without an attempt at explanation or a word of protest, had gone with the detective to the station, and had sent word to Forbush. Then he waited more in curiosity than



## THE END OF DREAMS

apprehension for developments. It seemed quite possible that something of this kind was necessary, and he was almost disappointed at his quick and easy exoneration. He could not help feeling that a more thorough delving into the case would have been to his advantage.

Then had come Vashti Garwood, that beautiful stranger of adventurous nature, who knew him at sight, called him by name, and spoke of a friendship that had evidently existed for some time. Vashti Garwood was not just the sort of woman that Demas would have turned to for companionship, but her mention of the dinner at Cook's seemed to promise some advance, and he determined to keep the appointment.

"Nace," he said to Forbush, as they turned their attention to cigars and an



## WHEN DREAMS BEGAN

idle evening in Demas's rooms after dinner on Wednesday, "do you remember what I said about going back with that detective? Well, I'm going up there to-morrow, and see if I can find out anything. If—well, if the trip shouldn't turn out well, I wish you'd go through my desk and straighten things out afterward."

"Good lord, man! What are you expecting to happen?"

"Nothing in particular, of course; but I might run up against something. For one thing, I might be arrested for burglary."

Forbush laughed.

"By jingo, that's so! I shouldn't be surprised if you were. Well, if you really are, just make yourself as comfortable as you can Thursday night in your cell, and, as I'll be there Friday



## THE END OF DREAMS

morning, send word to the hotel, and I'll come around at once and get you out."

Demas smiled. It might seem great fun to Nace Forbush, but as for himself he could not help feeling a presentiment of embarrassment. There was a knock at the door and the hall boy brought in a card.

"Our friend, Mr. Holtsclaw, has returned," said Demas, as he looked at it. "Show the gentleman up," he added, to the boy.

"What, Adam?" exclaimed Forbush. "Cheer up! Maybe he has found additional evidence, and is going to arrest you again."

Mr. Holtsclaw entered with the easy grace of a man who is accustomed to inquire into other people's affairs, and, after a laconic greeting, seated himself,



## WHEN DREAMS BEGAN

with his hat on the floor beside him, and turned directly to the business that had brought him there.

“Does it happen, Mr. Dayre,” he asked, “that you have a brother?”

“I’ve never heard that I had.”

“The reason I ast you is because I got a glimpsst of a man that looks mighty like you Sunday evening. I started to trail him, but got blocked for a minute or so at a street crossing, an’ he got so far ahead that I lost him in some o’ them joints down in the neighborhood of Cook’s, which is no special recommend for him if any o’ them is his reg’lar hang out.”

“Well, no,” agreed Forbush, “I should say not, especially Cook’s. That’s a mighty good place not to go after dark if a man wants to save his reputation and his money.”



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Right you are!” exclaimed the detective. “Though the slummers who are always chasin’ round tryin’ Bohemia are gittin’ on to the place, an’ if they don’t quit spendin’ money there, they’ll not only put Cook on Easy street, but will ruin the place as a crooks’ hang out.”

“Which would be very unfortunate for the police department?” suggested Forbush.

“Sure it would! When we’ve got such a place as that we know where to look for ’em. But there’s no use botherin’ with that now. Cook don’t know anybody o’ your name, or anyhow he swears he don’t. An’ I’m beginnin’ to weaken on the name part o’ it myself. Sure you ain’t got no cousin or relative, Mr. Dayre, that looks something like you, an’s got a name something like



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yours? Say, one"—there was professional shrewdness in the detective's suggestion—"that's something of a black sheep who's been cut loose from the fam'ly, and forgot?"

"No," replied Demas, "there has never been anybody like that. In fact, I haven't a relative in the world unless it be some old uncle or aunt that I've lost trace of."

"Well," said the detective, with a long breath, "this guy ain't no old uncle or aunt. I thought maybe you could gimme a new steer, but if you can't, you can't. But, say," he added, with the inspiration of a new idea, "it might help somehow if you could find time to come up, and let me take you round for Miss Collamer to have a look at. How does that strike you?"

"Well," responded Demas, thought-



## THE END OF DREAMS

fully, "Mr. Forbush and I have arranged to be there next Friday, when I'll try to see Mrs. Collamer and her daughter, and do anything I can to help clear up this matter. I'll let you know if I make any headway."

"All right," said the detective, "I can see her afterward, too, an' get her notion of it. I tell you, gents, I believe that chap's too slick to be loose. Besides, he's got my mad up, an' I'll run him down if it takes me from now till my finish. The department's losin' int'rest in the case because they don't think it amounts to much, but I'm goin' to stick to it. I think there's something in it."

"There will be this in it for you, Mr. Holtsclaw," said Demas, earnestly. "If you can capture him and hold him until I can come and meet him face to



## WHEN DREAMS BEGAN

face, I will pay you a reward of five hundred dollars."

"That's the talk, Mr. Dayre!" exclaimed the detective, enthusiastically. "Not, of course, that I work jist for rewards; but it shows you're in earnest, an' givin' me your—er—your moral support."

Both men, engrossed by their thoughts, smoked in silence for some minutes after the detective left.

"Demas," said Forbush, finally, "aren't you a little over-enthusiastic, not to say extravagant, to offer a reward of five hundred dollars for a man that so able a detective is already hot on the trail of?"

"Nace," replied Demas, "if there was a crook that looked like you, and was using your name, wouldn't you be pretty enthusiastic and even willing to



## THE END OF DREAMS

pay a pretty extravagant price to see him in jail?"

"Well, maybe I would."

"Besides," added Demas, more seriously, "such a meeting as that would mean a good deal more to me than you can imagine."



## CHAPTER V

### THE CHANCE THAT WON

**I**T was two o'clock Thursday afternoon, and the bright sunshine was filtering dully through the drawn curtains of his apartments when Demas Dayre awakened from a long leaden sleep. For a few moments he lay with his eyes closed; then, with a shudder that seemed to speak of impending disaster, he threw back the covers, and swung himself into a sitting position on the side of the bed with his head in his hands.

"Lord!" he muttered. "What a dream! The worst yet!"

He raised his head, and looked about him. Everything was familiar—the



## THE END OF DREAMS

carelessly convenient apartment of a bachelor of careless habits; the tobacco stand and tray with fresh and half-burned cigars, and ashes; a bottle, a siphon and a tall glass with half an inch of water in the bottom where what was left of the ice had melted over night; the photographs of women more dashing than lovely stuck about here and there; the carelessly scattered wearing apparel.

He moved a little uncertainly at first, as he rose and made his way toward the bath.

“They’re getting so they come too damned often,” he muttered; “too damned often and too damned hard.”

He turned on the cold water tap, and sat down on the edge of the tub while it filled.

“And the finish of that one—God! I



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

was there, and then—all at once!—I wasn't—any place. Ugh!" He ran his fingers through his limp hair, brushing it back from his forehead. "Something's going to happen to me some of these days, and—" The sentence finished with another shudder.

The bath had a stimulating effect, however, and when he had finished dressing with his usual care and good taste, his nerves were steady again. Demas Dayre was not a man who worried long over mere possibilities, however dire they might appear, and his thoughts turned from dread to speculation.

"After all these years," he muttered. "God! I hadn't thought of her before in—I don't know when. And she looked pretty nearly the same as in the old college days when we thought—"



## THE END OF DREAMS

He laughed a little grimly. "Damn that mask! She knew me in a minute. And now I suppose the police—Oh, well, it's all a part of the game, and it was too small a case for them to stick to long." He twitched his shoulders, and turned to his overcoat and stick.

"Mr. Gadgery was up to see you 'bout noon," said the elevator boy, as Demas stepped into the car. "He pounded and pounded on your door, but couldn't raise you. Said he guessed you'd got up early, an' went out, so he left this note for you."

Demas held the note a moment before opening it. If Tom Gadgery had been unable to rouse him by pounding on the door, he wasn't merely asleep, he must have been in a trance—practically dead. A shiver ran through him at the idea, and he hastily tore open the



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

note to turn the current of his thoughts. In the entrance hall, he stopped, and read:

DEMIE:

They've got some kind of a clue on that fire escape stunt, and have already made one arrest in another town, but the chap pulled an alibi. Look out for a fly cop named Holts-claw. It might be a good scheme for you to jump the burg again for a while. GADGEY.

"Gadgey is an ass!" he growled, crushing the note in his hand. "He ought to have more sense than to write such stuff—or anything else, for that matter. Still," he admitted, grudgingly, "I suppose he meant to do the best thing."

He straightened the note out, and touching one corner of it with a lighted match, walked slowly out of the door as he watched it burn. Then he tossed



## THE END OF DREAMS

the charred sheet into the air, and watched the brisk breeze tear it into fragments which were scattered in all directions.

“So they made an arrest—um-m-m,” he mused, as he walked slowly along the street. “Then that one I had Friday night was not a—But good God, if it wasn’t a dream, what was it?”

The shattered feeling came over him again, and as he sat down at his usual table in the pleasantest corner of the café, his preliminary order was for liquor. He lingered long over his first meal of the day, though he thought more than he ate, and his thoughts were not pleasant thoughts. Finally, with a shrug, he got up.

“I need cheering up,” he growled to himself. “I’ll go round and see how Vashti and the game are making it.”



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

At the corner he paused.

"The quieter streets are best," he thought, with Gadgey's warning in mind.

Half a block farther on, he tossed the end of his cigar away, and stepped into the angle of a doorway to light another. As he raised the match to strike it on the side of the building, he felt a touch on his shoulder, and turned to face Detective Holtsclaw.

"I want you," said Holtsclaw, in a low tone. "Come on with me now, without makin' no row."

In the few seconds pause before he answered, Demas thought rapidly—that dream of Saturday night; Gadgey's note about the arrest! There was a chance—it might be only one out of a thousand, but it was the only one possible now.



## THE END OF DREAMS

He smiled tolerantly at the detective.

"Really, Mr. Holtsclaw," he said, quietly, as if he were suppressing a feeling of amusement complicated with annoyance, "I should think you would get tired arresting me."

Holtsclaw stared.

"Why," he gasped, "you ain't—"

"Of course, I am. Weren't you expecting me?"

"That's so! You did say you was comin' up here, but I thought it was to-morrow. Well, if this case don't beat the devil!"

"Pretty queer, that's a fact."

"Have you seen anything of the other one?"

"No; have you?"

"Not a hair till I thought you was him."



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

“You’re not losing hope, are you?”

“Hell, no! I’ll run him down all right, an’ call on you for that five hundred yet, if you’ll gimme time.”

“Oh, I’m willing for you to take all the time you want to do a good job. Well, I’ve got to be moving along. If you find out anything worth while let me know about it at my hotel. I’ll be here several days.”

Vashti Garwood was a woman of enterprise and industry as well as beauty and daring. She occupied all the three floors of a tall, narrow building in a quiet and respectable, if not fashionable, part of the city. The front room at the side of the hall was fitted up in a business-like way as the office where she directed the commercial affairs of her fashionable dress-making



## THE END OF DREAMS

parlors, which extended back of it. On the second floor, with convenient access from the front and back entrances of the house, were her private apartments. The space on the third floor was not generally accounted for, but it was cautiously whispered that those of her clientèle who were in her confidence could, if they chose, in these other rooms, spend their afternoons in risking any part of their allowance they liked in such games of chance as entertained them; and quite as cautiously was it whispered that after ten o'clock in the evening gentlemen, properly introduced, could play for higher stakes.

Vashti was in her sitting room with the door open when Demas Dayre came up the stairway from the back entrance.

“Hello, Demie!” she called. “Come in here.”



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

Demas entered gloomily, and slumped down into an easy chair.

"Give me a drink," he said, huskily.

She glanced at him sharply, and saw that he was trembling. Then she shut the door, and, placing a taboret with a decanter and glasses at his side, poured out some liquor for him.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

Demas swallowed the brandy at a gulp, then filled the glass a second time himself, and emptied it.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked again, more insistently.

"Oh, I had a devil of a night," he replied; "and most of the day, too, for that matter—I've just got up. Nothing but nightmares, and terrors, at that. I'm a wreck of nerves right now."

She laughed.

"You a wreck of nerves?" she



## THE END OF DREAMS

scoffed. "I didn't know you had any nerves. Tell me about it. Maybe that will help the booze brace you up."

"God, no! I don't want to think about it, even."

Again he filled and emptied the glass, and this time set it down with more of his natural manner. The liquor was beginning to course through his blood, and to relieve the strain—not so much of the unsuccessful attempt to arrest him as of the way he evaded it.

"What's getting into you lately, Demie?" she asked, curiously. "When I saw you last Friday night—"

"Last Friday night?" he gasped, and his hand trembled again.

"Why sure! Are you daffy? Say, it isn't drugs, is it?"

He shook his head, and poured out another glass of brandy.



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

“Tut, tut, Demie!” she protested. “Go slow with the booze. At this rate you won’t be able to get about for my birthday dinner this evening.”

He drank the liquor, and with an effort got a grip on himself.

“Well,” he said, “what’s the rest of your kick about Friday evening?”

“Oh, nothing, only you seemed to be all to the moral, then. I suppose it’s part of whatever the game is down there, and you had to keep in character. But it must take a whole lot of railroad traveling to work both ends of your job.”

“Oh, yes,” he agreed, vaguely, “but I don’t mind that as long as it pays.”

“You’re a wonder, Demie.”

For a moment’s pause fear and curiosity struggled in him mentally, and then fear won. He turned the subject.



## THE END OF DREAMS

“What was it you said about your birthday dinner this evening?” he asked.

“My, but you must be the busy one to forget your dates that way. You’re going to throw a little party for me this evening at Cook’s, just you and me, for old acquaintance’ sake. I’m thirty-one, you know, but everybody doesn’t know, and I don’t tell other people about my birthdays.”

“That’s right,” he agreed. “I remember it all right. It was to be at half past eight, wasn’t it?”

“You said nine before, but I haven’t anything to do, so let’s make it half past eight.”

“All right, then,” he said, rising; “half past eight. I’ll come by for you. I don’t have to tell you to look pretty because you can’t help it.”



## THE CHANCE THAT WON

“Tush! Remember that I’m thirty-one, and have quit swallowing them whole. But, goodness, Demie, you’re not going already, are you? What did you come for? Just for a few drinks?”

“Partly. You always keep good liquor, Vashti. Which is a good deal of an achievement for a woman.”

“Oh, thank you, Sir!” she exclaimed, mockingly.

It was not because he was bored by Vashti Garwood, but because he was afraid of himself, that Demas Dayre left her so soon. He wanted to be alone; to think; to wonder; perhaps to tremble. At every turn he seemed to be finding out something that he did not want to know; something that he feared to know, but feared more not to know. And through it all he had premonitions that made him shudder.



## CHAPTER VI

### DINNER AT COOK'S

ONE of the peculiarities of Cook's was that it was bigger inside than outside. The careless passer-by would have noted it only as a common saloon. If he had taken a chance on entering it his first opinion would have been confirmed by the cigar case in front, the mirrored screen, the long bar, and, back of this, the long lunch counter on one side of the room and the row of undraped tables on the other. To knowing customers of limited means, imagination and possibilities, this was all of Cook's, except the little room at the end of the lunch room, where Cook or his trusted representative sat at a desk, midst



## DINNER AT COOK'S

clouds of cigar smoke, at all hours, ready to decide all questions instanter, from the purchase of supplies to the refusal of admission to those unknowns who had presumptuously knocked, and the ejection of the undesirable who were already inside.

But back of this room, running at right angles to it, and giving on a side street, was another part of Cook's, of which the wayfaring customer of scant means had little or no knowledge. This was for an aristocracy of skill and profit, and their venturesome friends who were willing to take some risks in order to see certain sides of life which were not ordinarily visible to them.

Behind the side street door, with the single red incandescent light about it, which opened on this comparatively little known portion of the place, was an



## THE END OF DREAMS

impressively courteous automaton in somber black livery which was relieved by numerous crimson buttons. It was his business to open the always locked door and admit those who were known or vouched for properly; or to reject those who were not, and, if they were insistent, to touch a push button in the wall to summon Cook or his trusted representative and such assistance as might be necessary to persuade the unwelcome that they were not wanted.

Half way down this passage a stairway led to the second floor. With each mounting step one became conscious of richer and more luxurious furnishings, until, in the corridor of the second floor, one forgot the vulgar and noisy garishness of Cook's of the street below, if he were acquainted with it, and thought of other things.



## DINNER AT COOK'S

Here one, or more, but generally two, were met by another impassively courteous automaton in somber black livery relieved by numerous crimson buttons, and escorted to one of the excellently appointed little dining rooms, which opened on either side of the corridor.

Speaking generally, there was no place in the city where better or more expensive food and beverages were served than on the second floor at Cook's, and very few places where such things were worse or cheaper than on the first floor. Thus, taken from top to bottom, Cook's was, in its way, a very convenient and extremely prosperous and profitable establishment, discreetly conducted.

There was no delay when Demas Dayre and Vashti Garwood rang at the door with the red incandescent over it.



## THE END OF DREAMS

The courteous automaton with the somber livery and crimson buttons bowed respectfully as he swung the door wide, and, with the grace of a head waiter, extended a welcoming arm toward the stairway.

The table in the room to which they were ushered was set for two. Its nappery was snowy, its silver and glass brilliant, and its service quick and wholly unobtrusive. Mr. Dayre was known at Cook's. His demands were exacting, but his tips were liberal, and his payments immediate.

Vashti threw off her wraps, and sat down to the table with a sigh of luxurious content.

"It seems a shame," she said, "that such a good place as this isn't really swell."

"Not for me," declared Demas, as



## DINNER AT COOK'S

he shook out his napkin. "If it was swell we'd have rotten music, and not such good things to eat and drink. There are a whole lot of hardships about being swell."

Vashti laughed.

"Well, anyhow, we're here," she said; "and it's fine. But do you know I hadn't seen you for so long I was afraid you had forgotten all about it till Friday night."

"When you say you met me—"

"When I say I met you? Oh, come now, Demie, it isn't the pipe or anything like that, is it? But after what you said that night I knew you'd be here all right."

"What did I say?" he asked, a little apprehensively.

"Say? Why, you said you would be here at nine o'clock sure, and from



## THE END OF DREAMS

the way you said it I knew I could count on it just like real money."

Demas's smile-mask not only held its place, but stiffened a little.

"What time did you say?" he asked.

"Why"—her tone exhibited a surprise that almost amounted to impatience—"nine o'clock."

Demas stroked his chin thoughtfully, and carefully pushing his cocktail glass further from the edge of the table, looked at his watch. It showed five minutes of nine.

"You wouldn't mind, would you," he said, shoving his chair back, "if I take my overcoat downstairs to have it brushed off while we're waiting for the soup? I got it dirty on the cab wheel, you know."

"Why not send it down by the waiter?"



## DINNER AT COOK'S

“Well, I want to see Cook a minute, anyhow, and I might as well take it down.”

“Oh, all right; but I shan't wait for you. I'm hungry, and as soon as anything to eat comes I'm going right ahead.”

“Sure! But it won't take me five minutes, and I'll keep the nine o'clock part of my engagement, too.” He laughed—perhaps a little uneasily—as he gathered up his coat and hat, and passed out, closing the door after him.

Vashti was somewhat puzzled, but neither offended nor worried. Demas Dayre always had his own ways of doing things, but he was always a good fellow, and good company. She rose leisurely, and readjusting the comb in the back of her hair as she went, stepped to the long narrow mirror that was set



## THE END OF DREAMS

between the windows. There she gave an imaginary tilt to her hat to make its angle more to her liking. Then she turned sidewise to the glass to get such view as was possible of the back of her skirt.

As she did so the ornate little French clock on the pedestal in the corner began, with a silvery tinkle, to announce nine o'clock. At the same moment the door was pushed open, and Demas Dayre stood in it with a grave but watchful and expectant expression. His inverness was on now, and he removed his hat as she turned toward him.

"Right on the dot!" she exclaimed, gaily, nodding toward the clock where the tinkling bell had just ceased.

He stepped inside and closed the door.

"Always," he said, as he glanced



## DINNER AT COOK'S

keenly around the room. He threw off his coat, incidentally touching his right hand to his hip, as if for reassurance.

"I think I'd rather have you sit on the side of the table facing the door," she said. "Then I can see part of myself in the mirror by rubbering a little."

"That suits me excellently," he said, with a smile that was meant to show her man's usual tolerance of woman's vanity. He eyed the empty cocktail glass curiously, as he sat down.

"Everything ordered?" he asked.

She looked at him in surprise.

"Why, yes, of course!" she exclaimed. "Didn't you—"

She finished with a half suppressed scream.

There was the sound of a revolver shot; the carafe that had stood in the center of the table was shattered, and



## THE END OF DREAMS

there was a hole in the mirror with a star-like lot of cracks extending from it. In the white panel of the door a black hole showed where the shot had come from.

In an instant Demas had rushed to the door, jerked it open, and stood there revolver in hand, looking up and down the corridor.

In another instant there was the rush of heavy feet padding along the thick carpet, and, as Demas drew back into the room, Detective Adam Holtsclaw, with two men behind him, rushed in, and covered Demas with his revolver.

"Drop that gun!" he growled, fiercely.

"Why, what's the matter here, Mr. Holtsclaw?" exclaimed Demas. "Who fired that shot?"

"Who fired that shot?" repeated the



## DINNER AT COOK'S

detective with truculent sarcasm. "You just drop that gun, and come with me. Drop it, I tell you!"

Demas quietly laid the revolver on the table.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Want? I want you, an' no monkey business about it, either!"

"Why, I should think by this time it was not worth while to arrest me."

"Say, now, that'll do for you! You gimme that gag once to-day, an' made it go, but never again—nit!"

Demas smiled.

"You will at least permit this lady to retire?"

"Yep; we don't want her—now. But we're goin' to have you—see?"

Demas turned to Vashti.

"I hope," he said apologetically, "that you will pardon this unexpected



## THE END OF DREAMS

and inexcusable interruption as far as you can."

Vashti had already hurried into her wraps, maintaining a discreet silence.

"You will find my cab at the door. Please take it," Dēmas went on, as she passed out. Then, turning to the detective, he added: "I am once more at your service, Mr. Holtsclaw, until I can again prove an alibi."



## CHAPTER VII

### TWO GREETINGS

**B**EATRICE COLLAMER painted on china, sometimes for pleasure with incidental profit, and sometimes for profit with incidental pleasure. Under the latter conditions the impatience of her patrons often amounted almost to a time limit on the work. It was a commission of this kind that urged her to the necessity of an early trip down town for additional materials. Thus it was only a little after eight o'clock when she left a crowded car to join the hurrying throngs on the sidewalk.

As she stepped up on the curb she caught her breath, and almost stopped.



## THE END OF DREAMS

From a café on the corner a man had just emerged, and was making his way toward a waiting cab. He was tall and erect, and wore an inverness closely buttoned and a silk hat, and gave the general impression that he had not yet found an opportunity to put off his evening clothes.

She was within half a dozen steps of him when, just as he was about to enter the cab, he turned toward her, and she found herself once more face to face with a man whose identity had been revealed to her by the slipping of his mask. In the full, clear morning light the face was so familiar that his name, with a word of greeting, rose to her lips, and then something—something different, something strange, something almost fearsome—checked it unuttered, and what had started to be a smile



## TWO GREETINGS

ended in her under lip being tightly held between her teeth. She fixed her gaze straight ahead of her, and moved on, but even as she did so she saw a smile, something like those of the happier days in college, but more worldly and audacious, spread over his face as he lifted his hat. Then, with a word to the driver, he stepped quickly into the cab, and the horse started briskly at the crack of the whip.

Beatrice's heart thumped and her breath came quickly as she hurried on. She could not understand her own feelings. At the first glance of recognition her sensation had been of gladness tempered by fear for his safety, followed by an impulse to urge him to go away quickly before he was discovered. Then, before she could act, she was swept by a feeling of revulsion, a sense



## THE END OF DREAMS

of an unexplainable difference and a desire to hurry away before he could speak to her. She told herself that this was because he had sunk from all that was noble and chivalrous to be a common criminal; and yet as she told herself this she did not believe it. That would be reason enough, she knew, but there was some other, something that she could not understand.

She made her purchases quickly, and hurried home to find, with relief, that her mother had gone out to spend the morning. With her disturbed emotions she did not want to talk. Her intention was to try to forget her distress in her work, and yet when she had put on her big painting apron and gone to her work room she did not take up her brushes. Wondering thoughts held her—thoughts of the bright prom-



## TWO GREETINGS

ise of the past and the wreck of the present—as she stood at the window staring out with only half seeing eyes at the jumble of house tops which stretched away in the smoky atmosphere before her.

Finally she set her teeth and clenched her hands; she must work—and forget. Spurring herself with this determination, she turned to her work table. But even as she reached it, the thoughts she had just put away from her returned with a rush that was almost overwhelming, and she tremblingly grasped the edge of the table to steady herself.

Before her lay a letter. Not in ten years had she seen that handwriting, but her memory of it had not faded.

For a moment she could only gaze at it in wonder. Fear clenched her heart at the thought of opening it; she



## THE END OF DREAMS

would, she must send it back without reading it; and yet, perhaps— An influence she could not understand impelled her to open it. Her hand trembled, but did not hesitate as she reached to pick it up.

But even as she grasped it the tension of her nerves lessened, and she sank in her chair with a long breath that told of relief from the strain. The wild beating of her heart slackened as she once more gazed at the superscription, and though her fingers were nervous when she came to open the envelope, they were not reluctant, and her hand was steady when she unfolded the enclosure, dated the evening before, and read:

DEAR BEATIE:

I had the startling experience the other evening of being arrested for robbing your home by a detective who said you had recog-



## TWO GREETINGS

nized me when the burglar's mask fell off. As I happened to be one of a large party at a late and long drawn out dinner on the night of the burglary, I had no trouble in establishing an alibi, and being released without prejudice. It must have been as startling to you to believe I was trying to rob you as it was to me to be accused of it. The affair is so queer that I should like to see you and talk to you about it, or if you don't want to talk about it, I should like to see you anyhow. I arrived late to-day, and will come to see you to-morrow afternoon if I may.

Yours as ever,

DEMAs.

She had no feeling of antagonism as she laid the note down after a third careful reading. It was from Demas, the Demas of other days, and breathed of an association that lay sweet in her memory.

It was all very strange, but no doubt



## THE END OF DREAMS

he could explain it, and if he could not, what did it matter? She had been startled and frightened, and had made a mistake—that was all. And yet when she had seen him that morning, he was so different, so— As she thought of that greeting, the feeling of aversion again possessed her; but now, as she held his note in her hand, and gazed at the writing she knew so well, she wanted to see him, was eager to see him. She went quickly to the telephone, and called a messenger. Then she sat down at her desk, and wrote:

DEAR DEMAS:

I shall be home all the rest of the day.  
Please come.

As ever,

BEATIE.

And when the boy had carried off the note, she returned to her work room



## TWO GREETINGS

with a song in her heart. The ten blank years seemed to have been wiped out of her life, and the old days of happiness and hope were come again. She took up her brushes cheerfully, and sang a little, softly, as she worked.

When the clerk had read the name Nace Forbush wrote on the hotel register, he quickly took from a pigeonhole a letter addressed to him in Demas Dayre's handwriting and marked "Urgent."

Fifteen minutes later, with the hotel detective, who knew him and could vouch for him, Forbush stood in the precinct police station, and saw Demas, escorted by an officer, come from behind the iron door that cut the cells off from the free world.

"It didn't take them long to get you,



## THE END OF DREAMS

did it?" he laughed, as he held out his hand.

"No," agreed Demas, smiling ruefully; "but they averaged it up by holding me a good while."

"Why, didn't you spend a pleasant night?"

Demas glanced back toward the cell with a shrug.

"Not exactly," he said.

The situation was explained to the sergeant in charge, and Detective Holtsclaw was called. For a moment he stared at Demas and Forbush, as they sat side by side; then he threw up his hands.

"Well, gents," he said, as one who offers an ample and graceful apology, "I guess the joke's on me."

Demas once more looked back at the cell chamber, and sighed.



## TWO GREETINGS

"It looks as if it were, Mr. Holts-claw," he said.

As they rode back to the hotel, Demas answered only vaguely Forbush's question as to how it all happened, and Nace did not push it. There were times when Demas would not talk, and recognizing this as one of them, Forbush remained silent. He knew that if Demas had anything he cared to tell, he would tell it sooner or later without urging, and that if he did not care to tell, no amount of urging would draw anything from him.

Meantime Demas was pondering on what to tell. To go into all the circumstances connected with his arrest meant that he must describe his meeting with Vashti Garwood at the hotel, when she had called him by name and reminded him of their dinner engagement; and



## THE END OF DREAMS

to explain all this would carry him into personal depths where he did not yet care to venture. The result was that he decided to make no explanations whatever.

While they were waiting for breakfast, Forbush threw out another feeler—just in case Demas might need a little encouragement to go into details.

“You might have told them who you were, and where you were from,” he suggested, “and had them telegraph—”

“I tried to, but they wouldn’t even listen to me. Holtsclaw said I had fooled him once that day, and he didn’t propose to be fooled again.”

“Fooled him once? Did he mean that—”

“I didn’t find out what he meant. They shoved me behind the bars then, and I didn’t hear anything more.”



## TWO GREETINGS

“Demas,” said Forbush, solemnly, “it means that that other chap is around here yet, and that he’s not hiding, either. Gad, but he must have a nerve! Why, we might run across him any time, and—Say, Demas, what would you do if you met him face to face?”

For a moment Demas did not answer. He appeared to be thinking seriously.

“I don’t know exactly,” he said, finally, “but I think something would happen.” He paused, and then added slowly: “Something that might be rather difficult to explain.”

Forbush nodded understandingly, with the hope that he would be present at the time. He felt sure that it would be worth while.

“If you’ve nothing for me to do, Nace,” said Demas, as they rose from the table, “I think I’ll try to get a few



## THE END OF DREAMS

hours sleep. I didn't rest very well at the police station."

"All right. I've got a whole bundle of chores to do while I'm here, so take your time, and I'll see you later."



## CHAPTER VIII

### FROM BEHIND

DEMAS DAYRE awoke with the feeling that he had been snatched from the brink of a precipice beyond which was the chasm of personal oblivion where men disappeared and were never seen again. He came into the possession of his faculties slowly and with a shudder, followed by the consciousness that some one was pounding violently on his door. For a minute or two he lay still, half in wonder, half in fear, waiting for the noise to stop. But it did not stop. The afternoon sun was streaming into his windows, and the room was perfectly light, yet even this cheerfulness acted slowly in dispelling



## THE END OF DREAMS

the horror he felt. He had been so near the end, had averted the catastrophe by such a narrow margin, had seen such incontrovertible signs of the inevitable—

The pounding on his door continued, and he roused himself with an effort.

“Come in!” he called, in a voice that he steadied with some effort.

The door knob rattled, and the knocker said something impatiently that he could not understand.

“Wait a minute!” he called.

He got out of bed, and staggered to the door catching at the furniture as he went.

“Who is it?” he demanded.

“It’s me! Open up,” responded the voice, muffled by the heavy oak.

He turned the key, and, moving quickly, but uncertainly, across the room, dropped down on a couch.



## FROM BEHIND

The door opened, and Tom Gadgery entered. He wore the well fitting clothes, the fancy waistcoat, the striking necktie, the immaculate linen and the impressive diamonds of the prosperous gambler. His smooth-shaven face, ordinarily pale and hard, was now flushed from his exertions at the door and his annoyance.

"Well, for God's sake!" he exclaimed, irritably. "Was you in a trance, or was you just dead?"

"I don't know," Demas answered, dully, with the falling inflection that indicated he had not fully comprehended the question.

"What's the matter with you, anyhow?"

Demas roused himself with an effort, and straightened up on the couch.

"Nothing," he replied. "Why?"



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Why? Didn’t somebody take a crack at you through the door at Cook’s last night, and didn’t you get pinched? Vashti sent me word about it early this morning, and I see in a minute that you was in bad. Then I got a hustle on, and when I went down to the police station they tells me that some bloke from out o’ town had squared it. What’s the answer?”

Demas walked over to the table where the decanter was, and filled a pony.

“Have a drink?” he asked.

“No, I won’t have a drink—yet. I want to know what this is all about, anyhow.”

Before answering, Demas drank the liquor at a swallow.

“I don’t know,” he said—again with the falling inflection of non-comprehension mixed with indifference.



## FROM BEHIND

Gadgey stared at him.

“Look here, Demie,” he said, “have you been hittin’ the dope?”

Demas refilled the glass, and took another drink. The liquor warmed him, and he laughed a little.

“No,” he said, more naturally, “but I’ve been having some rotten bad dreams—ugh!” The exclamation was both natural and affected—natural from the remembrance of what he had gone through, and affected in as far as it attempted to lighten a situation which Gadgey was treating rather tensely.

“Well, then, how about all this business, anyhow?” he insisted.

Demas hesitated a moment; he was thinking rapidly.

“The fact is, Tom, old man,” he said, “I can’t let you in on this business—just now. Everything’s all right, but



## THE END OF DREAMS

—You see, somebody besides Vashti turned up at Cook's last night; somebody I wasn't looking for; and—well, I can't go into the thing very clearly without mentioning names, and that wouldn't be exactly the square thing to do because she—”

He stopped, and Gadgey walked over to the decanter more cheerfully, and took a drink. There is, among gamblers also, honor—of a kind.

“All right, old chap, I guess I'm enough on,” he said; “but you'd better skin your cards close and play slow.”

Thus Demas knew that Gadgey understood what he intended him to understand, and that the incident was closed for the time, at least.

“Well,” went on Gadgey, “if that's all there is to it, I'm sorry I got rattled, and woke you up, but—”



## FROM BEHIND

"I'm not," said Demas, grimly.  
"I'd had plenty of it."

"What was it all about, anyhow.  
Tell me—"

Demas threw up his hands.

"Cut it out!" he exclaimed. "I'm  
trying to forget it."

"Oh, all right. But you'd better lay  
low, and not go out in the bright light  
for a little while till things settle down.  
There's too many people want a word  
with you. But there's another thing I  
wanted to see you about. You've got  
to come back to the place, and help me  
look after things. There's getting to  
be too much business for me by myself,  
and as Vash has to do the ornamental  
what time she is there she can't help  
much. We want you badly. Come on  
back to-night, can't you?" Gadgery  
took up his hat.



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Yes—I guess so. Yes, I’ll be there about the usual time. So long.”

He stood still several minutes after Gadgy went out. Presently he laughed, not a cheerful laugh, but the strained laugh of a man who is, out of sheer bravado, defying the fate of which he is horribly afraid. Then he walked over to the bed, and taking a revolver from under the pillow, extracted an empty shell and replaced it with a loaded one.

“I’ll have to do better next time,” he muttered; “for I’ve got to get him, or he’ll get me; and I’ve got to do it from behind.”



## CHAPTER IX

### AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

**L**ONG and deep were the breaths that Demas Dayre drew as he stood by the open window of his room trying to rid himself of his weird obsession. It bore upon him heavily, but not menacingly; and he was encouraged by the thought that he had awakened after something like six hours sleep, a shorter time than ever before when those dreams had come to him. The dreams themselves had lately begun to take on different forms, and he seemed to be making some headway in the struggle that had so long appeared to be impossible; and beyond, in a brighter



## THE END OF DREAMS

light, had appeared the goal of triumph with its peace and rest.

With a long deep filling of his lungs with the cool air fresh from the sunlight of the bright afternoon, he turned to the telephone, and ordered coffee—hot, strong and black.

The cheer of hope that amounted almost to confident expectation was in his mood as he finished dressing. There was to be an end to the curse which made him different from other men, and that end was to be the end he had so long striven for.

Cheerfully he put away the anxieties that had so long possessed him. Now he was to see Beatrice Collamer, to hear her voice and her laugh, to feel the touch of her hand in his. He turned once more to her note which he had read on arising.



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

“Please come,” it said—no, she had not forgotten those better days when he, at least, was so much happier. She wanted to see him—but did she want to see him as much as he wanted to see her? He smiled a little as he shook his head. “No,” he thought, “that would be impossible.”

Not only did Mrs. Collamer spend the morning away from home, but she conceived the idea, possibly as a result of discreet suggestions from her daughter, that a certain duty call could not be deferred later than that afternoon. Thus it was when Beatrice opened the door to admit Demas Dayre she was alone. For a fleeting second she looked at him keenly, anxiously. Before her was the same tall, erect figure she had seen when she unexpectedly turned on the lights in the dining room, and the



## THE END OF DREAMS

same features that her startled gaze had rested on when the mask had fallen, but —There was a difference which could be felt if it could not be seen, and she held out her hand to him in cordial welcome.

“I’m glad to see you, Demas,” she said, with that simplicity of confidence which asks no questions.

“And I’m more than glad to see you again, Beatie.” He did not release her hand at once, but held it while he looked into her eyes, which met his fully and frankly. Time, in a moment, harked back from his futile traversing of long, profitless years, and all was as it had been.

She asked no explanations, but led the talk to the old college days with a zest that spoke only of pleasure in their recollection, and made them seem al-



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

most as yesterday. And then, in time, she trod the more dangerous ground of nearer things, and told him of her life since they had parted; of the death of her father—the able lawyer and all round good fellow who provided so liberally for his family during his life that there was scant income after his death; of her work as a decorator of china; and of the simple and uneventful life led by her mother and herself, quite contentedly.

“And you have succeeded?” she asked.

“No,” he said, smiling cheerfully; “I have failed utterly, so far.”

She raised her brows a little at the words which were so contradicted by the smile.

“Yes,” he went on. “I have done nothing in all the years since we left



## THE END OF DREAMS

college but fix myself so I could live a lazy life which has a good many lonely spots in it."

"But there has been nothing in it that you are—" She stopped; "ashamed of," she was going to say, but the thought of the marauder in the dining room checked her, and she finished hesitatingly—"regret?"

"Nothing, except that it has been—nothing. It is too blank for greater regrets. But now I hope to make it fuller of realities. Tell me about the—burglar."

It was the first mention of the incident that had been in the undercurrent of the thoughts of both of them, and a thrill growing out of the very mystery of the thing passed through her. All her lightness and much of her serenity fell away, as she faced the unexplain-



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

able, but she faced it bravely, and told the story in all of its detail.

“Demas,” she said, earnestly, “there is something about it all that I can’t understand, and I suppose I never shall understand. Truly, it seemed to break my heart to tell that detective that it was Demas Dayre I saw in the dining room that night, but—Demas,” her tone was tenser now, “when the light flashed up, and he turned to face me, he cried out in the strangest voice, ‘Beatie!’ . . . No one”—her tone now was almost that of one pleading forgiveness for a fault—“no one ever called me ‘Beatie’ but you, Demas. And then when his mask slipped off right there in the glare of the light, it was *you*, Demas, you—the face, the figure, the voice—How could I—” She stopped and put her clenched fists



## THE END OF DREAMS

to her eyes for a moment. "But I know it was *not* you! Who was it?"

Her final words rose almost to a cry, and in the question was the pathos of one who calls for aid in her disbelief. For a moment she gazed at him appealingly, and then her face sank to her arm which rested on the table beside her.

Demas moved quickly to her side, and took her hand.

"Beatie," he said, in a low tone, "I am going to ask you to trust me a great deal in this. You might, by your testimony, put me in prison to-morrow, but—"

A quiver ran through her body as if she had been hurt, and her head, still resting on her arms, shook protestingly.

"No, Beatie," he went on, "I know you'll not do that, but—Will you trust me? I know who the thief was, but I



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

cannot tell you—now. Some day I'll find him. Some day we'll meet face to face, and then—”

There was the sound of the opening and closing of a door, and Demas resumed his seat. Beatrice raised her head, and, with nervous hands, touched her hair here and there. A moment later Mrs. Collamer entered the room.

“Mama,” said Beatrice, rising, and speaking in quite her usual voice, “this is the Demas Dayre who did *not* break into our dining room the other night. You remember him, of course?”

Mrs. Collamer adjusted her nose glasses, and threw her head back.

“Why, bless my soul, Mr. Dayre, of course!” she exclaimed. “The way Beatrice acted about that was just too silly for anything. How could it have been you when it was just a burglar?”



## THE END OF DREAMS

I told Beatrice plainly that she was crazy, and then she didn't say a word, but just cried and cried, as if her heart would break."

Beatrice's color rose a trifle at this revelation, but her mother didn't notice it.

"Just as if you could possibly have—Why, of course!" And Mrs. Collamer sat down convinced that she had presented irrefutable evidence.

"Well," said Demas, "I have no feeling against Beatrice, even if she did manage to have me arrested—"

"Arrested?"

"Yes; the detective got me quickly enough, but I established an alibi, and—"

"Of course! How nice!"

"One of the things I really came to this city for was to see if I couldn't



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

manage somehow to clear up the mystery. I haven't had much success so far, but haven't given up hope, and shall keep at it."

"Yes, indeed! Why, a man like that ought to be arrested for looking like you—or anybody else for that matter." Mrs. Collamer was always just. "Well, well, it's a very mysterious affair; and I'm just all tired out, so if you don't mind I think I'll lie down a little while before dinner." And Mrs. Collamer took herself out of the room with the comfortable feeling that she had observed all the social amenities very successfully.

As Demas dropped his eyes from bowing her out, they fell on a smartly engraved card that lay on the table. His brows knotted and his jaws tightened as he picked up and read it. It



## THE END OF DREAMS

announced that Vashti Garwood, couturière, importer and creator of exclusive gowns, was prepared to show the latest and most fashionable fabrics, domestic and foreign, and to take a limited number of orders for artistic effects. Demas looked up curiously.

"Is this your favorite couturière, Beatie?" he asked, with perhaps a trace of anxiety in his voice.

"I never heard of her till I got that card by mail; but for all that she might be ever so fashionable. I never really know who is and who isn't."

"Then you won't accept her alluring invitation to patronize her?"

"Hardly! You see, I make most of my own. If she knew my possibilities I don't think she would even care to have me call and examine her offerings. She has either made a mistake, or some



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

one has been playing a joke on her."

Demas's laugh, as he laid down the card, had a note of relief in it; but he made a careful mental note of Vashti Garwood's address.

It was with a good deal of satisfaction that Demas listened to Forbush's apologetic explanation that he could not be with him that evening, on account of an unexpected but highly important business engagement. He had other plans that he felt he could best carry out by himself.

So at eight o'clock he left the hotel alone with the feeling that the night was full of possibilities. And yet the cabman he discovered dozing on his box just around the corner in the quieter side street, was a harmless looking individual.



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Do you know where 437 Duane street is?” asked Demas.

The cabman grinned broadly and then chuckled.

“You’re al’ys havin’ your joke, ain’t you, Mr. Dayre?” he said, with the respectful familiarity that is befitting to a good customer. “Does One-Eyed John know where—” He broke into another chuckle.

Demas looked at the man in surprise, both on account of the recognition, and the name the man had given himself. It was clear from the light shed by the arc lamp at the corner that he not only had two eyes, but that, though they were small and piggish, both were in excellent working order, and not without a suggestion of shrewdness mixed with a liberal tolerance for the whims of that part of the world which is wil-



## AFTER PROFITLESS YEARS

ling to pay cab fares. Nevertheless, One-Eyed John was the name that most people called him, as a result of his frequently made declaration that one eye was all a man needed to see all that was good for him in his business.

“All right,” said Demas, “take me there.”

“Private entrance, sir?” The man spoke as if he knew what was expected of him.

Demas paused with his foot on the cab step.

“Well, no,” he said, slowly; “just drive by in front of the place to the next corner, and I’ll make up my mind by that time whether I want to go in or not.”

As the sleepy looking bay jogged along in and out of the glare of corner lights, Demas’s thoughts easily passed



## THE END OF DREAMS

the cadence of the hoof beats. Who was Vashti Garwood? What had she to do with Demas Dayre? That she was a mere dressmaker, however fashionable and prosperous, he could not believe.

"There's something more to that place than that," he thought, as he looked out sharply for such house numbers as he could discover.

When they had reached the 400 block in Duane street, Demas pushed up the trap and ordered the driver to walk his horse. Number 437 presented an eminently respectable exterior. The number on the transom was dimly illuminated, and light shone faintly through the hangings of the lower windows. Otherwise the place was dark, and silent.



## CHAPTER X

### THE FALLEN IMAGE

**D**EMAS DAYRE looked at his watch.

"Five minutes of nine," he said, as he set his demi-tasse on the taboret at his side and dropped his cigarette in it.

"Cheer up," chuckled Gadgery. "People will soon be coming along to leave their money with us. This plant is one of the best we ever run, and perfectly respectable, too. By jingo, it's more'n respectable!" he exclaimed, as he looked around at the luxurious furnishings of the reception room where they were taking their after dinner coffee. "It's nothin' less'n swell."

In one corner of the room was the



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highly ornate metal grill work guarding the elevator shaft which extended to the hall of the private entrance three floors below. In the wall toward the front was the broad arched sliding door, with draped back curtains, which gave on a long and brilliantly lighted room, rich in opportunities for wooing fortune clandestinely—and being jilted. At the back were windows with heavy hangings through which no ray of light could penetrate. On one side was an alcove almost filled with a richly upholstered couch, and opposite, near the elevator shaft, was a door into the hall which led to the stairway and the front part of the house.

“I suppose your discreet footman is on duty by this time all right, Vashti?” said Demas.

Vashti Garwood, lounging in the



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luxurious depths of a big Turkish chair, laid down an illustrated paper, and looked up. Evening dress, in its elaborate simplicity, added, if anything, to her beauty; her hair and eyes were midnight, her cheeks the early dawn, and her neck and shoulders the dazzling whiteness of the arctic day.

"Why, of course," she said, tossing her cigarette into an ash tray. "You're getting awful nervous lately, Demie."

"Merely discreet." He laughed a little—but not carelessly.

"Well, just to satisfy you," she said, "I'll try him." She moved languidly across the room, and swinging open what appeared to be a panel in the wall, disclosed a telephone booth. Touching a button, she placed the receiver to her ear.

"Hello!" came a voice that was



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clearly audible even to the two men where they sat.

"Everything all right, Antoine?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Garwood, thank you; but no arrivals as yet."

"Of course not," she exclaimed, as she hung up the receiver. "Nobody ever gets here till ten o'clock or later. But that satisfies you, I hope, Demie."

"All but the telephone," he replied, "I could hear it plainly even here."

"So could I," said Gadgery. "I like a good telephone all right, but that one's too good. It talks too loud. Better have it changed. We might not want everybody in the shop to hear what the man at the other end was saying sometimes."

Vashti laughed.

"Both of you seem to be pretty hard



## THE FALLEN IMAGE

to please to-night," she said. "But don't worry. When things get to going here nobody ever hears such a little voice as comes out of a telephone." She swung the panel back into place, and returning to her chair, lighted another cigarette.

"I suppose that's so," agreed Demas, rising, and taking a turn about the room uneasily; "but in this business we can't be too—discreet; for the sake of our clientèle as well as our own."

Gadgey looked at him thoughtfully.

"There's no use talking, Demie," he said, "you're 'way to the bad in the nerves; and you have been ever since that fool trick of climbin' that fire escape. Was it the climb in the dark, or was it the girl that jarred you?"

"It wasn't either," retorted Demas, shortly. "I'm all right."



## THE END OF DREAMS

"Just the same, you'd better lay off, and take a hike into a nice quiet bunch of respectability somewhere—at some of the lake resorts, maybe—as soon as it gets a little warmer. It won't do you no harm, will it, Vash?"

"No," said Vashti, a little sarcastically, "unless he'd happen to find that girl spending her vacation at the same place. Where did you say she worked, Demie?"

Demas turned shortly in his walk, and faced them. His face had hardened, and his eyes shone with a menacing light.

"That'll be plenty of that," he said, coldly. "When I've got anything to tell, I'll tell it. Till then we'll let things stand as they are. Neither of you is losing anything—"

The telephone bell tinkled, and he



## THE FALLEN IMAGE

stopped. Vashti again swung open the panel, and took down the receiver.

"Hello!" she said.

Again the voice, minimized in the transmission, but still audible all over the room, came through the receiver.

"Permit me to announce, Miss Garwood, Mr. Demas Dayre."

Vashti gasped, Gadgery half started from his chair, and Demas sank on a couch with his face gone white.

"Who?" she demanded, with a thrill of something like apprehension in her voice.

"Mr. Demas Dayre." The name came clearly, distinctly and unmistakably.

"Very well," she said; "in five minutes have him brought up." She swung the panel shut, and, turning, looked for a moment at Demas without speaking.



## THE END OF DREAMS

"What's the answer?" she said, at last.

"I—I give it up," he replied, jerking his chin into the air nervously, as if his collar were choking him.

"Well, if that don't beat the devil!" exclaimed Gadgely, in a puzzled tone. "Now there's Antoine knows you as well as anybody, and here he's sayin' you're comin' when you're already here."

"Have you a double?" asked Vashti.

"Not that I—I never saw him."

"And the prospect of seeing him doesn't seem to cheer you up much, either, does it?" she said, as she looked at his white face. "What are you going to do?"

Demas braced himself.

"I guess," he said, in a tone that was held steady by sheer force of will,





PERMIT ME TO ANNOUNCE MR. DEMAS DAYRE.







## THE FALLEN IMAGE

"we'd better play this game cautiously till we find what's in it. It may be some kind of a joke or a fake or—or it may be something that will need more attention. I'll just go to the rest room till you find out what's in it." He opened the door into the hall, and stood for a moment as if he would say something more. Through the stillness came the metallic click of the elevator door sliding into place three floors below.

"Let me know if I'm wanted," he said, hurriedly, as he went out and closed the door behind him.

For a moment the silence that followed his exit was only broken by the faint purr of the elevator cables. Vash-ti's mind was made up quickly, and she spoke in a low tone, but rapidly.

"I'll play this game by myself, Tom,



## THE END OF DREAMS

at the start, anyhow," she said. "You go into the card room, and slide the door shut. It will be easy enough to make you hear when I want you."

Without a word, Gadgery stepped into the next room, and drew the door behind the curtains noiselessly.

Vashti glanced hastily around the room. The couch was the best place. It was opposite the elevator where she could see best, and likewise be seen to the best advantage. Hastily she sank down on it in a half reclining position, and arranged her draperies gracefully. By the time the top of the elevator appeared through the grillwork she had established herself in an attitude of luxurious indolence.

The door of the elevator was shoved back with a snap, and the conductor, stepping out, announced:



## THE FALLEN IMAGE

“Mr. Demas Dayre.”

Vashti, with a premonition of something uncanny, had braced herself for all the possibilities, but that which came was almost too much even for her well disciplined nerves. Demas Dayre, whom she had seen go through the hall door five minutes before, now stepped from the elevator, and bowed before her.

“I fear,” said Demas, “that I am earlier than I should be, but I am sure you will pardon me, for you know I am a stranger to the city and its ways.”

Brief as the speech was, it gave Vashti a chance to recover herself, and she rose gracefully from the couch, and extended her hand.

“My friends cannot come too early,” she said, cordially. “Especially any friend who lent moral support in time



## THE END OF DREAMS

of need." She spoke in a slightly uncertain manner, as if feeling her way. "For I hope you have not forgotten that we have met before—elsewhere?"

"That is why I am here," said Demas, "at the first opportunity. The first meeting served to make memorable an evening I should otherwise want to forget."

She raised her brows inquiringly for a moment, but did not follow the lead he had given.

"My house is open to you," she said; "and a little later I hope it will prove more entertaining. For the present let us sit down here," she went on, leading the way to the alcove. "I am sure we shall not be disturbed for half an hour, at least."

"Among my other reasons for calling this evening is to apologize for the



## THE FALLEN IMAGE

unceremonious way in which our dinner was interrupted last evening."

For a scant moment her eyes rounded large; then, with a slight catch of her breath, she smiled.

"Such mistakes are bound to happen to every one sometimes, I suppose," she said. "Remember my own embarrassing experience on another occasion. But I presume you had no further trouble when you had an opportunity to identify yourself?"

"None whatever. Nor was I any the worse for it. And though I can't say that I like to be shot at, especially through the panel of a door, I'm rather glad it happened. I think I have learned something."

The smile had faded from her face, and there was a serious, wondering expression in her eyes. During a mo-



## THE END OF DREAMS

ment of silence she looked down as if in deep study; then her curiosity triumphed.

"Who are you?" she asked, raising her eyes until they met his fully.

Having considered her opportunities for acquiring information since the evening before, Demas had been expecting some such question as this, but he had not thought it would be asked in so quiet, serious and direct a manner. He smiled at her evident perplexity as he answered.

"Demas Dayre, of the Sycamore club," he said; "an idler of scant importance; but for the time, at least, at your service."

"Oh, yes," she said, slowly, still looking at him curiously, "I see."

"Oh, no," he returned, "begging your pardon, but you don't."



## THE FALLEN IMAGE

For the silent moment that followed her gaze did not waver.

"No," she said, "I don't. Tell me."

"I can't; for I don't, either, exactly." He gazed around the room with evident appreciation of its furnishings, and spoke in a lighter tone. "You have a beautiful place here," he added.

The expression of her face changed. If it was his mood to dismiss for the time such a mystery, she was willing. There were other ways in which she might learn something for herself. The smile returned to her lips and the sparkle to her eyes, even, it seemed to Demas, with greater brilliancy than before.

"Yes," she said, "I have tried to make it attractive. Beautiful surroundings, I think, add to one's pleas-



## THE END OF DREAMS

ure, and"—she spoke with a fine air of ingenuousness—"what adds to the pleasure of my guests, adds to my profit. Would you like to see some of the other rooms?"

"Very much; especially if they are, as I have no doubt, as charmingly appointed as this one."

She led the way to the hall, and turned toward the front of the house.

"Our rest room," she said, "is our real gem. There we have tried to attain the acme of luxurious and soothing comfort."

In the dimmer light of the hallway, Demas thought he caught a new expression in her eyes—the expression of one who ventures on an enterprise that is certainly doubtful and possibly dangerous.

The light of the hall grew still dim-



## THE FALLEN IMAGE

mer as they proceeded till they stopped before the open door of a room that was dark.

“Just a moment,” she said, “and I will turn on the light.”

As she fumbled for the switch beside the casing there was the sound of the quick closing of a door in the opposite corner of the room, and she started with a suppressed exclamation. Then the light flooded the room, and Demas stepped in. On a luxuriously upholstered couch the indentation in the cushions marked recent occupancy, and the hangings in the door at the further corner still swayed slightly.

After a keen glance about the room Demas once more turned to find her staring with agitation at the swaying hangings.

“You have,” he said, “achieved a tri-



## THE END OF DREAMS

umph in that rarest of all combinations—art, luxury and comfort.”

She gazed at him without reply, seemingly without words for a reply. Then seeing her raise her hand to the electric switch, he stepped back into the hallway. As he did so something whizzed by his head from the dark end of the hall, struck the door jamb with a thud, and fell heavily at his feet. In the farther darkness there was the sound of hurrying footsteps, as if on a stairway, followed by the slamming of a distant door. The hand Demas had thrown to his hip as he peered into the dark end of the hallway came back to his side, and he stooped and picked up a small bronze image of Buddha.

“How fortunate,” he said, “that it is of solid metal. Otherwise the fall might have injured it.”



## CHAPTER XI

### THE BURDEN OF FEAR

VASHTI GARWOOD, couturière, garbed in the artistic simplicity of the successful woman of business, sat at the desk in her office, idly but nervously. Before her was a small bronze image of Buddha. Although it was two o'clock in the afternoon, she had the distraught air of one who has slept badly and risen late. She was paler than usual, and there were slight evidences of dark circles under her eyes. Twice she made a movement as if she would take the receiver from the telephone on her desk, but both times she sank back in her chair without doing so.



## THE END OF DREAMS

"No," she half whispered; "I'll wait. He's sure to come."

Half past two came, and she still waited. At three o'clock she rang for her assistant. She was not well enough to see customers that afternoon, she explained, and would go to her own sitting room. With her she took the bronze image of Buddha.

At half past three she lighted the lamp under the samovar, and sought the cheer of Blossom Pekoe and Oolong. At four she rose from her chair impatiently, fully determined to telephone, when a light tap sounded on the door. Quickly she sank back in her chair, and taking up the empty tea cup, composed herself.

"Come in," she said.

The evidences of disturbed rest and late rising were still more marked in



## THE BURDEN OF FEAR

the appearance of Demas Dayre as he came into the room and closed the door behind him.

For a moment she eyed him sharply without speaking. Even then she was not sure.

“Well?” she said, non-committally.

He dropped into a chair.

“I’ll have a drink first, Vashti, I guess,” he said.

It was a silent sigh of relief she breathed as she filled a glass from the decanter. She knew now.

“Well?” she again demanded, more confidently.

He set the empty glass on the table.

“Well,” he repeated. “What?”

She picked up the bronze image of Buddha.

“What made you throw this last night?”



## THE END OF DREAMS

"What makes you think I threw it?" he asked.

"Because no one else could, or would." She spoke accusingly, and with absolute confidence.

His pretence of a yawn was not convincing.

"You've been dreaming," he said.

"No, I haven't been dreaming. You threw this image at the man who stood by me in the door of the rest room last night, and then"—her voice took on a strong tinge of sarcasm—"ran. You shot at the same man through the panel of the door at Cook's. Why?" Her tone was certain and relentless.

He made no further attempt to deny the acts.

"Maybe I was jealous," he said, nervously.

She jerked her head impatiently.



## THE BURDEN OF FEAR

“Why?” she repeated, with her eyes fixed compellingly on him.

He fidgeted under her gaze, but was silent. Then he seemed to sink into thought. The clock on the mantel tinkled forth the chime that indicated a quarter after four.

“Why?” she repeated again, with immovable eyes.

He drew a long breath.

“Well,” he said, half defiantly, “he looks too much like me. It’s liable to cause confusion, and get me into trouble.”

“Oh!” she scoffed. Then, as he did not speak, she added: “Don’t you think that, take it all around, it will be better for you to tell me the truth? I’ve seen enough to know there’s something queer in this business. You know me well enough to know that you won’t



## THE END OF DREAMS

be any worse off for telling me, and it may turn out that you'll be a whole lot better off for putting me into a position to act, if necessary, understandingly. I've never gone back on a friend yet."

"No," he said, "you haven't. But—but I can't tell you because—because I don't know, myself."

She stared at him in amazement.

"Don't know!" she exclaimed. "Don't know why it is you want to kill—"

"No!" he interrupted harshly, and with enough excitement to make the hand he extended toward her tremble. "I don't know, except I've got to kill that man, and the sooner I do it the better."

Again came the relentless question.

"Why?" Then realizing the futil-



## THE BURDEN OF FEAR

ity of it, she added: "What makes you feel that way?"

"Why? Because I have to! I've either got to kill him, or—" He stopped with a shudder.

"Or what?"

He did not answer, but sat with his face in his hands, and she regarded him with a doubtful look. Was his mind—Surely up to the last few days he had been as always. She tried again.

"What has he done to you?" she asked in low, measured words, striving by her own calmness to quiet him.

"Nothing—yet." There was a long pause between the words.

"Then what do you expect him to do?"

"I—I don't know," he answered reluctantly.

"Where did you first see him?"



## THE END OF DREAMS

"I never saw him!"

"What!"

"If ever I meet him face to face it will be the last of—" His face, which he had raised, again sank into his hands, and his words ended with a quick catching of the breath.

For a few moments she sat watching him in silent wonder. Was it an idiosyncrasy, an hallucination, an obsession? Again she filled the glass from the decanter, and offered it to him.

"Drink this," she said. "You need it."

He tossed it off without a word, and again buried his face in his hands.

Another long pause followed, during which she decided on her attitude toward his unfathomable mood.

"Look here, Demie," she said, earnestly, "you've got to brace up. A



## THE BURDEN OF FEAR

few days of this sort of thing will put you so far to the bad that you'll never get back. So be reasonable. People don't cast spells in these days. This is a civilized age when most things are known, and nobody is afraid of them. Why, that man doesn't even live here, and will probably be going home in a day or two, and—"

"He left this morning with the friend who got him out of the police station. I had him watched after last night."

"So much the better! You'll probably never see him, or even hear of him again."

He laughed a little, and harshly.

"Won't I?" he exclaimed. "You'll see. I'll hear from him again, and I'll see him. He'll hunt me down till some day we meet face to face, and then—"



## THE END OF DREAMS

He paused, and laughed again harshly—the liquor had warmed him. “Oh, well, what’s the difference? It can’t be but once.”

Her face cleared a little.

“Now you’re doing better,” she said; “a little more of that, and you’ll be up to concert pitch again, and will laugh at all this foolishness.”

“Maybe,” he agreed, as he rose to fill the glass again from the decanter.

There was a knock at the door, and when Vashti opened it a letter was handed to her. Unceremoniously she opened it, and read:

DEAR MISS GARWOOD:

I had hoped to see you again before I left the city, but I find that it is impossible. I feel so sure that you can throw some light on a subject in which I am interested that I shall return before long to talk it over with you if I



## THE BURDEN OF FEAR

may. A note in care of the Sycamore Club will reach me promptly, and I shall be very glad to hear from you, in the meantime, concerning this subject if there is anything you care to write.

Sincerely yours,

DEMAS DAYRE.

“What is it?” he asked. He had sat down again, and his face was resuming its normal expression.

She caught her breath, and flushed a little.

“Oh, nothing,” she replied, hurriedly trying to thrust the note back into the envelope; but her fingers trembled, she fumbled it, and the envelope fluttered to the floor with the superscription up.

“So?” he exclaimed, springing forward, and picking it up. His eyes spread with wonder as he looked at it.



## THE END OF DREAMS

The handwriting might have been his own. "Let me see that note, Vashti," he commanded, almost roughly.

"It's none of your business."

"Will you let me see that note?" There was a sternness in his tone that alarmed her, and she was not easily alarmed; but she answered boldly.

"No!" she said, holding the paper behind her.

"Look here, Vashti"—he spoke with cold determination—"I don't want to be harsh or rough with you, but I'm going to see that note. This is the last time I'm going to ask you. Will you let me see it?"

"No!"

With a quick movement he whirled her around, and snatched the note from her hand. Holding her away from him with one hand, he raised the note with



## THE BURDEN OF FEAR

the other, and read it. His face paled again, but he held himself well under control.

“Thank you,” he said, as he handed it back to her. His voice was strangely strained, and ended in a harsh laugh. “You see I am likely to meet him again, after all. And if I do, Vashti—Well, if the worst comes to the worst, my friends won’t have to go to the trouble and expense of burying me.”

Without another word he picked up his hat and stick, and left the room.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE FLAME OF HOPE

SINCE Demas Dayre had slipped the leash of college authority, and taken up the life of a hunter who thinks that all game is fair, he had given scant thought to the might-have-been. Such desirable part of the world's goods as he could get, in one way or another, he had considered as only his rightful share. Sometimes his desires were easily gratified, and sometimes their gratification required the nicest skill and was attended by great personal risk, but there was to him a zest in the achievement that made even the game itself worth the candle.



## THE FLAME OF HOPE

In the glare of such a present as he had lived, the past had faded to an undiscernible dimness that caused it almost to be forgotten. But when, recognizing Beatrice Collamer, he had dropped his loot, and, as he turned to fly, his burglar's mask had slipped from his face, the memory of other days surged back over him almost overwhelmingly. And when he had found safety in flight to his own apartments he sat there alone, and, for the first time, compared what was with what might have been; not with remorse, or even regret, but wonderingly.

It was a strange tangent that the course of his life had taken, yet he did not see how it could have been otherwise. The fixed and narrow limits of conventionality were not for him; and, as he looked back now on the restraints



## THE END OF DREAMS

he faced when he was entering manhood, he almost understood the change which made him what he was. In all of the last decade only the dreams that came to him had distressed him; and these at first caused irritation rather than distress, a rebellious feeling that his rest should be so unreasonably disturbed. But as these dreams grew in frequency and vividness, and with each recurrence seemed to point more relentlessly to the inevitable, the horror gained upon him until he lay down with fear and rose, when they had not come, with all the thankfulness that was in his nature.

And now to this horror, which had increased almost beyond the limit of his endurance, was added the burden of memory. Beatrice Collamer! When he repeated her name to himself, her



## THE FLAME OF HOPE

anguished face, as she screamed his name, rose up and haunted him, and, for the first time, he was ashamed—not ashamed of what he was, but that she knew what he was.

Beatie! He uttered the diminutive tenderly to himself, and shrank again, smitten by the unseeing look in her eyes as she passed him that morning. And yet, knowing what she knew, she had, he was confident, taken no further step to put the law on his trail. Perhaps—and the thought warmed him!—the memory of old days came tenderly to her also. And why not?

Why not? The cry rang through his mind from day to day drowning the voice of his riskily achieved and dearly paid for worldly wisdom.

Why not? He was a man the world must reckon with; a successful man in



## THE END OF DREAMS

the way he had chosen. He could give her all that any woman might ask.

He cringed at the thought of her association with his companions; but that was not necessary; she need never know them, or know of them. There would be a home elsewhere where he could go to rest in quiet, and to forget those dreams—a shudder ran through him. But could those dreams be forgotten even in such a home, and how long would such a home last for him? He set his teeth. For three nights now the dreams had not come. He would free himself from them. By his own will he would break the spell. Vashti was right. This was no day of mystery. The thing was foolish. He would conquer it. There was one way, one certain way—He never went out unarmed.

And he went often, and recklessly,



## THE FLAME OF HOPE

as it seemed to the more cautious Tom Gadgey.

“It’s a fool thing to do, Demie,” he protested. “What’s the use of lookin’ for trouble? You know Holtsclaw wants you, and he’ll get you, too, one o’ these days the way you’re doin’.”

“Don’t worry, Tom. The job was too small for Holtsclaw to get much excited about, and he’s probably dumped it by this time.”

But Gadgey shook his head. He was helpless, he knew, to influence Demas, and he was worried. He would have been still more worried if he had known of the visitor at whom the bronze image of Buddha had been thrown; but the closed door in the archway had left him undisturbed, and he readily accepted Vashti’s explanation of Antoine’s announcement as a little joke



## THE END OF DREAMS

undertaken by one of their frequent visitors.

Meantime, there had been no further mention of the subject by either her or Demas; and while she had declared to him that the days of mystery were past, she was not so sure, in her own mind, that this was so. She, too, was disturbed by Demas's movements, not so much by fear of his arrest by Holtsclaw, as that he might meet with the other some day, and find himself in a prison cell with the charge of murder against him. For she did not make light of his declaration of his intention. She had known him a good while, and she knew that when he spoke in that way he meant it. To his own fears she knew it was useless to appeal, so she tried another way.

"If you're not careful how you show



## THE FLAME OF HOPE

yourself around town," she said, "something will happen to you that will get us all in trouble."

"I never got any of my friends in trouble yet, did I?" he demanded.

"No."

"Well, I'll not begin with you and Tom. I may get into trouble myself, but—that's my business. Don't you worry, Vashti; I know what I'm about."

"Maybe you do, but you don't act like it. I wish you'd keep under cover better."

Demas only laughed, and continued to go about as before. But his movements were more discreet than they seemed to be. He did not go near his usual haunts; Cook's knew him no more. On the contrary, his wanderings took him into neighborhoods and places that were too respectable and well behaved



## THE END OF DREAMS

to be vigilantly policed. One-Eyed John's cab carried him slowly past the Mirador apartments at various hours of the morning, afternoon and evening; but that discreet jehu curbed his unusual wonder with discreet silence. The fare was liberally forthcoming, and that was all that concerned him.

From a remote corner in the quiet reading room of the public library Demas, looking over the top of his book, watched the crowds come and go for hours at a time. Through the rooms of the art museum he strolled with his best air of elegant leisure, and watched the shifting visitors as he moved from picture to picture. And here it was that his search was finally rewarded.

It was just after the doors had opened in the morning, and too early for more than an occasional visitor. As



## THE FLAME OF HOPE

he stepped into the Dutch room, and gazed quickly and keenly about, as was his habit, he stopped and stood still a moment while he took the long breath that tells of a task accomplished.

In the corner of the room farthest from the entrance she was seated before a study of tulips and hyacinths making sketches of the flowers for use in her own work.

So silently he crossed the room she did not notice his presence until he spoke to her.

"Good morning, Beatie," he said, quietly.

At the sound of his voice she turned quickly toward him with a smile of glad surprise. Then, before she had uttered the greeting that had risen to her lips, her smile faded and her eyes rounded with apprehension.



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Don’t be afraid, Beatie,” he said, reassuringly. “I just want to talk to you a little; to explain something.”

She glanced about her. They were alone in the room.

“Who are you?” she asked, tensely.

He looked at her in surprise.

“Why, don’t you know me?” he exclaimed, in a hurt tone. “I didn’t suppose you would forget me, even in ten years, after—I’m Demas Dayre, don’t you remember?”

For a long moment she looked straight at him without speaking. Should she call for help, and denounce him to the police? Her first inclination was to do so; then the courage of her love came to her. Before her stood the mysterious man of the black mask, the man who had usurped Demas Dayre’s name, figure, face and even voice; the



## THE FLAME OF HOPE

man who, she intuitively felt, menaced Demas Dayre's welfare, happiness and perhaps life. She crushed down her rising fears. Perhaps this was an opportunity for her to help raise the unexplained burden which she knew Demas was carrying.

"You are not Demas Dayre!" she said, in a low tone.

He laughed a little, and sat down in a chair near her.

"I didn't know I had changed so much," he said, lightly. "But I can identify myself in half a minute. Don't you remember how I was hit with a baseball at college, and was unconscious for nearly a week; and how you used to come to see me, and bring me flowers when I got better? And don't you remember all the good times we had before that? How we talked of what life



## THE END OF DREAMS

really was, and what we should do with it? The world didn't seem very big or hard to get along with in those days, Beatie."

She stared at him in speechless amazement. Who was this man who spoke in such a familiar tone of the past happenings in Demas Dayre's life, and its associations with her own? Her heart pounded fiercely in her breast, and she breathed rapidly.

"Who are you?" she again demanded, almost gasping.

He shut his eyes tightly and drew down the corners of his mouth in the comical grimace she had so often laughed at in the old college days.

"You seem to have such a bad memory," he said, in indulgent complaint, "that I suppose I shall have to begin and make your acquaintance all over



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again. But you'll help me, won't you, just to save time?"

The smile that he hoped to evoke did not soften her lips, and her face now was set, almost stern.

"You are the thief who broke into our flat that night," she declared, accusingly. "Thief!" she repeated.

He threw up his hand in a gesture of protest.

"Don't use such a word, Beatie," he exclaimed, earnestly. "It isn't—pretty. That's just what I wanted to explain to you. Of course it's natural that you should feel hard toward me after that because you don't understand. I couldn't stop and explain then, you know; and, besides, at the sight of you, I was so—so—rattled that I really didn't know what I was doing."



## THE END OF DREAMS

He paused momentarily in the hope of some expression of sympathetic curiosity from her. There was none. Of interest her face showed no lack; but it was not sympathetic interest.

“You see the whole thing was a mistake, a fearful mistake on my part,” he went on, fluently—had he not rehearsed this explanation many times?—“It was all the result of a bet, a foolish bet I’ll admit, but I undertook it. It was this way: A friend of mine has a man who takes charge of his apartments and does everything for him. He trusts everything in this man’s charge, and boasts that he is a regular watch dog. I got so tired hearing him talk of this paragon that I bet him I could steal something out of his rooms right under the man’s very nose. And that was what I undertook to do. But



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I was not familiar with that part of town, and became confused, partly, no doubt, from the excitement attending such a strange adventure. The result was that I picked out the wrong apartment house, and my little excursion into the burglary business landed me in your flat."

He leaned back in his chair as he concluded the explanation with the deprecating smile of one who feels he has acquitted himself too thoroughly to be the victim of further enmity.

Still there was no relaxation in the severity of her expression. Still her heart thumped and her pulses raced, while the difficulty she had in breathing almost made her pant. The situation was intolerable. She gathered up her sketching materials nervously, and rose, steadying herself with her hand on the



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back of her chair. With a great effort she controlled her voice.

“You are lying!” she said, looking him squarely in the eye.

“Beatie!” he exclaimed, his voice almost trembling. “How can you—how can you say that to me after—after all that we were to each other in the old college days?” He rose, and tried to take her hand, but she drew it quickly away.

“Go away!” she exclaimed. “I—I can’t stand this any longer. I must go!” She turned from him, and started toward the door.

“But, Beatie,” he insisted, stepping quickly to her side, “you must believe me! Don’t condemn me without a thought. When can I see you again?”

She stopped as if half dazed by a new thought, a new possibility which she



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hardly felt the courage to face, and he stepped between her and the door.

“I—I don’t know,” she said.

“Here,” he quickly wrote an address, without his name, on a leaf torn from his notebook, and thrust it into her hand. “Write me to that address when and where I can see you; and, Beatie, let me know soon. I must see you, and make you believe me.”

She clutched the scrap of paper in her hand nervously.

“Let me go!” she cried.

He stepped aside, and, raising his hat, watched her with troubled eyes as she passed out of the room.



## CHAPTER XIII

### AT THE ANCHORET

NEVER had a letter been more welcome to Demas Dayre, and never had he read one more carefully, but there was one paragraph in it standing out so conspicuously from the rest that he returned to it time after time. Near the end she had written:

I should like very much to have you come here again as soon as you can make it convenient. There are some things I want to talk to you about that I don't feel as if I could write—they are too uncanny. I have seen the man who broke into our flat that night, and have talked to him. Don't be alarmed about this because I am sure I have nothing to fear from him, but—it was all very strange. I don't understand it. Perhaps you will.



## AT THE ANCHORET

The next afternoon he sat in the Colamer apartment at the Mirador, and listened to the story of the meeting at the art museum—listened thoughtfully and anxiously, and yet as if he understood, in a way, how such a thing could be.

“But what is it, Demas?” she exclaimed, earnestly. “What *is* it?”

“Were you afraid of him?” he asked, passing the question.

“No-o-o—that is, not afraid he would hurt me, but—I was afraid—of something—I don’t know what. There was something awful about it. He looked like you, and talked like you. and knew of the old days at college, and yet I knew that he wasn’t you. I felt it just as soon as I had looked at him. Who is he?”

For a moment he did not answer.



## THE END OF DREAMS

What could he say? The testimony of dreams is too unreasonable for serious consideration.

"Let me have the address he gave you," he said, finally, "and I'll try to find out."

"Demas!" her voice rose with anxiety. "You must not do that. He is a thief, a criminal! He might—"

"You met him, and talked to him, and—"

"Oh, that was different! It was in a public place, and—I am a woman—No man would—"

Demas smiled.

"Your confidence is flattering, Beattie," he said, "but—don't be too confident. Some men would—do anything."

"But it *will* be dangerous."

"So is everything." He spoke



## AT THE ANCHORET

lightly. "It's dangerous to ride on the cars, dangerous even to cross the street; and I don't think it will be any more dangerous—to me. I have a good deal of confidence in the discrimination of Providence."

"But—"

"Oh, come now, Beatie, you take this thing too seriously." His tone grew still lighter. "It's very queer, of course; but there ought to be some kind of an explanation. I don't suppose there is anybody in the world but that has a double some place. The peculiar thing about this is that we are almost close enough together for comparison; and yet, no doubt if we stood side by side you'd notice so many differences that—"

"No," she declared, decidedly; "you are the same except—"



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Except what?”

“There is something—something in—in the personality that is different. I—didn’t see it; I felt it.”

Demas laughed. His whole idea was to turn her thoughts from the awesome mystery of the thing, and to relieve her of her fear of it. Her peace of mind was quite as important to him as anything else.

“Well then,” he said, “give me a chance to feel it. I imagine it will be rather interesting for both my double and myself.” It was with a conscious effort that he kept his tone from grimness as he said this.

Reluctantly she got the crumpled paper and handed it to him. As he examined it closely he almost started. There was not the slightest difference. It had the same swinging strokes, the



## AT THE ANCHORET

same peculiar formation of letters—He might have written it himself.

It was after eleven o'clock the next morning when Demas found the street number that had been written on that crumpled piece of paper. The building, tall and narrow, was devoted to bachelor apartments, and the hallway of its entrance gave evidence that it was well kept. Of those who had apartments there the rent was collected in advance, and no questions were asked as long as that rent was forthcoming and a reasonable degree of quiet maintained. Its tenants were all well dressed, albeit some of them wore rather extreme styles and perhaps brighter colors than were entirely approved by the prevailing mode. Cut into the stone arch of the doorway and gilded, was the name "The Anchoret," at each



## THE END OF DREAMS

end of which, for some reason possibly known to the builder, was carved a small anchor. Such things occur at times in the over rapid development of architectural classics.

As the elevator sank into place, and the door was slid back, the youthful conductor grinned cordially.

"Howdy do, Mr. Dayre," he said. "There ain't nothin' come yet. Oh—goin' up this time?"

The recognition did not surprise Demas as much as the fact that his desire to go to what were presumably his rooms was unexpected. Rapidly the car shot upward, and, without direction, stopped at the seventh floor. As the door closed behind him, and the elevator descended, Demas looked once more at the crumpled paper. It directed him to apartment Number 716, and a dozen



## AT THE ANCHORET

steps down the hallway brought him before the door with its bronze figures.

He paused. If this were the decisive moment, he was ready for it—yes, eager for it! He threw his hand back to his hip momentarily, and then knocked sharply.

“Come in!” called a voice. The tone was unafraid, and clearly not shaded by any thought even of a possibility of trouble.

With his muscles tense and ready, Demas pushed open the door and stepped into the room.

In another door, opening from a far corner, stood Tom Gadgery, razor in hand and half his face lathered.

“Why, hello, Demie!” he exclaimed, cordially. “Wher’ve you been for a month of holidays, anyhow?”

Demas’s muscles relaxed, and he



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drew a long breath. Perhaps, after all, he was not disappointed that the crisis had not been reached.

"Oh, not much of any place," he answered.

"Been havin' any more bad dreams lately?"

The hesitation in Demas's answer was caused by the sharp look he gave as Gadgery stepped back into his bath room to finish shaving, and a moment's satisfaction due to confirmed suspicions. The other, too, had dreams, then.

"Not to amount to much," he answered, non-committally.

"You're lookin' better, anyhow," said Gadgery, from the bath room, as his razor scraped noisily over his stiff beard. "Nothin' but a case o' nerves that you ought to be ashamed of.



## AT THE ANCHORET

You'll come out of it all right, an' be as good as new."

"Better, maybe," suggested Demas.

"Sure, better! Why not? When are you goin' to get busy again, and help me and Vash run things?"

"Well, I don't know just yet."

"Come back to-night. We need you. Business is fine, and we ain't doin' a thing but packin' the velvet up in bales. And besides, for a little sport some night, I've got my eye on a couple of good easy things we can pull off. No gettin' into the wrong flat with these, either; they're—"

The whir of the telephone bell interrupted him, and still mopping his face with a towel, he walked across the room, and took down the receiver.

"Hello!" he called. "Huh?"—  
"Yes, sure I'm here. Come on up



## THE END OF DREAMS

whoever you are.”—“Huh?”—  
“What?”—“Who?”—“Aw, quit your  
kiddin’. Who is it?”—“Huh?”—  
“Come off! That don’t go.”—“Why?  
W’y because Demie’s right here in the  
room with me now, an’—What?”—  
“You won’t come up?”—“Hold on!  
Wait a minute. I want to know  
who—”

Demas, with his suspicions aroused, had arisen, hat in hand, at the beginning of the telephone dialogue. At the last words he jerked open the door, and ran down the hall to the elevator, not heeding Gadgery’s call for him not to go yet. The car was just descending.

“Down!” he called, sharply.

“Hurry!” he cried, as he stepped inside; but machinery is inexorable, and the car sank at its usual speed.



## AT THE ANCHORET

Demas did not wait for the boy's deliberate movements, but, as the elevator reached the ground floor, threw back the door himself, and sprang into the hall ready for what might happen. But once more the effort failed. The hallway was deserted. Leaning against the wall by the telephone was a heavy walking stick with a crooked handle. He caught it up, and hurried out of the door.

Almost a block away he saw a cab turning the corner with its horse on a brisk trot. It was the same cab that had carried him to Vashti Garwood's.



## CHAPTER XIV

### FEAR OF SLEEP

THE last visitor had gone, and, sitting alone in the deserted rooms, Tom Gadgery had carefully measured the night's harvest, and, with a lively sense of satisfaction, had stowed it away in the safe. Then going to one of the reception room windows he drew back the heavy hangings and raised the sash to let in the fresh air lighted by the first beams of the May morning sun. Vashti Garwood had been sleeping for hours, and would sleep for hours longer in order that she might be bright and fresh to meet the front door business of the day. For Vashti was not one to



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imperil her beauty or vivacity by late hours and unprofitable dissipation.

As he stood there by the window watching the light grow stronger and listening to the gradually increasing noise of the day, Tom Gadgery's reflections were far from satisfactory, and from time to time he shook his head slowly in melancholy disapproval. For weeks he had borne the brunt of the nightly work which Demas Dayre should have shared, and—for all the charity of friendship—he was getting tired of it. But while this caused him some annoyance, it was by no means the full measure of his distress. He was worried about Demas, about his long and mysterious absences, and about his flightiness and moodiness when he appeared. To be sure, the brief glimpse he had when Demas came to his rooms



## THE END OF DREAMS

a few mornings before was reassuring as to his physical health; but such satisfaction as was to be had from this was practically destroyed by the sudden and unexplainable departure of the erratic one. Something must be done to bring Demas to his senses. It did not look as if any one were going to be able to learn the cause of the trouble, such a mystery Demas made of it, but whatever it was, he must be taken in hand; he must—

The train of Gadgery's thoughts was suddenly arrested, and he half turned away from the window in a listening attitude. From below, through the stillness, had come the sound of the closing of a door, and now, as he listened intently, he could hear the muffled thud of slow footsteps on the stairway.

The caution of a varied experience



## FEAR OF SLEEP

caused him to glance quickly toward the safe to reassure himself that he had locked it. He was not, however, expecting a marauder; he was expecting Demas Dayre, expecting him with a heart full of friendly reproaches, protests and appeals to his reasonableness.

But when Demas Dayre stood in the doorway these thoughts fled, and Gad-gey sprang toward him with an exclamation of surprise.

“Lord, Demie!” he cried. “What’s the matter with you?”

Demas ignored the hand extended to help him, and, crossing the room, sank heavily into a chair.

“Nothing,” he replied, dully. “Why?”

“Why?” repeated Gad-gey, as he stared at the man before him, haggard, hollow-eyed and with a hand that trem-



## THE END OF DREAMS

bled as he raised it to take off his hat.

“W’y, you look like the devil!”

“Oh,” said Demas, indifferently, as if his personal appearance were of too small account to call for explanation. “I haven’t slept for three or four nights.”

“The devil you haven’t! Why not?”

For a moment Demas leaned wearily back in his chair in silence, and then spoke in the tone of one who is too tired to make any further effort at concealment.

“I’ve been afraid to sleep,” he said.

“Good God, Demie! Are they houndin’ you as close as that? What do they want you for—No, never mind; don’t tell me. I don’t want to know. But, Lord Almighty, man, you must have rest or they’ll get you sure! Come along with me to my rooms, and I’ll



## FEAR OF SLEEP

stay awake while you knock out ten or twelve hours, and get on your feet again."

Demas shook his head wearily.

"It would be dead safe," insisted Gadgey; "but I s'pose if you felt nervous about it, it wouldn't do you much good." He paused a moment reflectively. "I've got it, by jingo!" he went on. "Go out to Dutch Heinie's, and stay a while. Good, fresh country air and eats to quiet your nerves, and safer'n a jail! W'y, you could sleep there day and night for a week, and come back fresh as a new deck."

"It isn't that I'm afraid of getting caught." Demas still spoke wearily. "I'm just afraid to sleep, that's all."

"Why?"

"Dreams." He uttered the word almost with a cringe.



## THE END OF DREAMS

“Oh, hell!” exclaimed Gadgey. “Forget it! You’ve got too much sense for that sort of thing.”

“You don’t suppose,” retorted Demas, this time with his weary tone slightly tinged with sarcasm, “that I haven’t tried to forget it, do you? I’m not doing this for the mere sport of the thing.”

Gadgey walked to the window, and looked out. He was irritated, almost disgusted, with Demas’s lack of nerve, lack of self control; and yet—he must be sick, and pretty sick at that; nothing else could account for such a state of mind. Gadgey came back slowly with more tolerant thoughts.

“Look here, Demie,” he said. “I don’t want to knock, but when it comes to a man of your nerve bein’ put pretty near down and out by any such gag as



## FEAR OF SLEEP

this, I can't play the game. Say, now, get right down to brass tacks. Ain't there a girl in this?"

For a moment Demas straightened in his chair aggressively, and then sank back as he was.

"Yes," he assented; "in a way, there is."

"Huh?" Gadghey snorted. "I thought so. Who is she?"

Demas did not answer. As Gadghey watched him a queer thought came into his mind.

"Say," he exclaimed, "it's not that girl who recognized you in her flat that night, is it?"

Demas shifted uneasily in his chair, but desire for the relief that sharing trouble gives overcame him.

"Yes," he said.

"Well, if that don't beat—Say, do



## THE END OF DREAMS

you know her for sure, and does she know you?"

"Yes."

Gadgey sat down again.

"Tell me the story of your life," he said. "It'll do you good to unload, and maybe I can give you a common-sense tip or two."

"We used to go to college together, and knew each other pretty well. In fact we were just as good as—Then I didn't see her for about ten years; not until that night I got into the wrong flat. Since then I've been looking for her all the time and everywhere—"

"Hm-m-m-m, that's what you've been doin', eh?"

"I found her one day, and tried to square myself, but I didn't make it go very well. I asked her to write me at your rooms when I could see her again,



## FEAR OF SLEEP

and I've been to the Anchoret twice a day ever since to ask the elevator boy for the letter. Tom, I've got to see her again, and square myself! She's everything she used to be, and more. I don't see how I ever forgot her for so long, but—I'll never forget her again."

"Well, well," said Gadghey, soothingly, "don't take it so hard. Like enough it can be fixed. Maybe Vashti can help—"

With an impatient gesture Demas rose.

"She doesn't belong in Vashti's class, Tom; nor yours, either, for that matter," he said, a little bitterly. "I had my chance once, and then—But it isn't all over. It can't be. She can't have forgotten everything. And I need her! If I was just sure of her, if I knew that when I got home—and



## THE END OF DREAMS

I'd have a home, too!—she would be there waiting and glad to see me, I wouldn't be afraid of—Well, that would be enough to knock those damned dreams out so they would never come again. But, Tom, I tell you just as sure as you're alive, if she turns me down I'm a goner!”

He sat down again, and buried his face in his hands, while something almost like a sob shook his shoulders.

“Well, now, look here,” said Gad-gey, still soothingly, “you cut out the booze, and go out to Dutch Heinie's, and maybe by the time you've thought it over sensibly for a week you'll get a new line on the thing. While you're gone Vash and I will talk it over, and see if we can't—No,” he interrupted himself quickly, as Demas was about to object, “we won't butt in. We'll



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just try to frame up some scheme that you can work. It don't stand to reason, Demie, that a girl's goin' to turn down a fellow like you if he goes at her right, and shows her that he means it, and it's on the level. You ought to know that yourself. What you need now is rest and sleep so you can get a grip on yourself. That'll help you more'n anything else. So, you for Dutch Heinie's for a while. The rest'll be easy. And now let's go get some breakfast."



## CHAPTER XV

### FOR LOVE—AND LIFE

**I**T was with a feeling of infinite relief that Beatrice welcomed Demas when he came on the evening of his visit to the address she had so reluctantly given him. Just what she feared she did not know, but there was something so unreasonable, so unnatural about the affair she felt that almost anything might happen.

“You saw him?” she asked, anxiously.

“No,” he answered, with a smile intended to reassure her; “I didn’t even get a glimpse of him.”

“Then there was no such address?” She spoke eagerly, with a feeling that



## FOR LOVE—AND LIFE

it would be better not to know where such a strange, incomprehensible being was to be found.

“Oh, yes; I found the address. It’s a rather nice place; bachelor apartments, I should think. But I don’t believe he lives there.”

She looked the question she did not ask, and he went on.

“The elevator boy greeted me promptly enough by name, but rather as an occasional visitor than as a tenant, and when I found the room I interrupted a man at his morning shave who was an entire stranger.”

“But didn’t he know—”

“I didn’t ask him that, because I didn’t want to direct attention either to the other or myself, and our peculiar resemblance. It occurred to me that he might merely have an arrangement with



## THE END OF DREAMS

the elevator boy to care for his mail for him."

Beatrice breathed a sigh of relief.

"Then there's no use going there any more, is there?" she asked.

"I don't know; I suspect not."

"Oh, don't go any more, Demas! It wouldn't do any good if you did find him, and I'm sure there's some danger. We'll probably never see or hear of him again."

"I wish I really could be sure that you would never see or hear of him again."

"Why should I ever see him again?"

"For no reason, if you can avoid it. But I'm very much inclined to believe that you will see him again when, as before, you least expect it. It's pretty clear that he wants to see you and try to convince you that there was a mistake;



## FOR LOVE—AND LIFE

and I'm afraid he will find a way. If you do see him tell him—" He paused.

"Tell him what, Demas?"

"Tell him," he spoke more lightly, "that I'd be very glad to meet him any time he could find it convenient to talk over our peculiar resemblance and the strange apparent similarity of some of our past experience."

But after Demas had said good-bye, and left to take a train for home, she made up her mind that she would bear no such message to the incomprehensible stranger in the entirely unlikely event of her seeing him again. All she asked now was that she and Demas should never see him, and be able to forget him utterly. For her days and her thoughts were now too precious to be wasted on an interloper.

It seemed almost as if Time had



## THE END OF DREAMS

turned backward ten years in his flight, and that the days so dear to her memory had come again. Now, once more, he was the Demas of other days, and she was—Beatie! It had been a long while since she had been Beatie, and it was very sweet.

Hers was now the happiness of faith. Demas had not explained what led him to withdraw himself so completely from his friends and from her, and thus wreck the hopes that she was sure then and sure now he shared, but she asked no questions. Vaguely it seemed to her that the other man who called himself Demas Dayre had something to do with it; but she put this thought from her as foolish and unreasonable.

Even when she felt that Demas knew more of that other man than he had told her, she had no spurring curiosity. If



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there were that to tell which she should know, in good time he would tell her, and until he told her there were good reasons for his keeping silent. And if the mystery of that man kept Demas from speaking to her, as she knew from his tones and actions he was eager to speak, she would wait, and wait patiently. It was something—something better than she had known for ten years—that he should come so far to see her, and to know, to feel that he would come oftener and come with greater eagerness as the time passed. So she worked happily with her brushes, and her thoughts sang even at times when her voice did not.

It was one of these thought songs that was interrupted one afternoon some days after Demas's visit by a ring at the door. She laid aside her brushes



## THE END OF DREAMS

and quickly taking off her apron went to answer it, smoothing her hair and humming happily to herself as she did so. But the song ended in a gasp between stiffened lips as she opened the door.

“Beatie! Beatie!” he cried, in a low pleading tone. “Don’t look at me that way! Oh, please don’t!”

Then, as she did not answer, but merely stood looking at him with eyes rounded large with wonder and touched with fear, he went on in a voice that was tender and beseeching.

“Don’t be afraid, Beatie. I’ve come to—to explain. I must explain—I can’t sleep, I can’t live if I don’t make you understand. You must understand, Beatie. Oh, Beatie, Beatie, for the sake of the old days, you will listen to me, won’t you?”



## FOR LOVE—AND LIFE

Her fears passed as she listened to his pleading words, and she felt only wonder. Who was he? How did he know of those days he spoke of so familiarly? Surely she should learn if she could, and yet—

“My mother—” she began.

“I know,” he interrupted. “I saw her go out. I’ve walked up and down the street keeping the entrance in sight for hours, for I felt that I must see you alone. You did not write to me as you—as I hoped. I’ve been twice, sometimes three times a day every day to get your letter ever since I saw you. I’ve looked for you everywhere I thought you could possibly be. But it was no use. The only chance to see you was to come here, and—I came.”

Her face had softened, but she still hesitated.



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“You are not afraid of me, Beatie, surely you are not afraid of me! Why, I’d give my very life to keep you from harm.”

She swung back the door, and he entered. For a moment they looked at each other in silence—he with eyes that were satisfying a gnawing hunger of the heart, and she anxiously yet keenly, trying to detect the difference—the difference she could feel, but could not see.

“Well?” she said, finally, making her voice as colorless as she could.

“Beatie,” he said, “I slept last night for the first time in five nights. I couldn’t sleep because I was thinking—what it meant to have you—not understand. Beatie, it was all a mistake about that night—on my word of honor it was. Why, even if I had—had sunk to what you thought, you cannot be-



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lieve that I would—do you any harm. You know me better than that, Beatie.”

She turned her eyes straight on his and for all her excitement, spoke in a tone that was firm and low.

“I do not know you at all,” she said. “Who are you?”

“Oh, Beatie, Beatie, after all that has passed! After all that we were to each other—then. You can’t have forgotten! You do know me! You are only hurt and angry because—because I made a mistake. Don’t condemn me for that, Beatie. I know I haven’t been all that I should have been, but I had no home, no friends, no—Beatie. I had lost you. I did not know where you were, nor even where to search for you. The world has been hard, but I have made my way, Beatie, and I can offer you—Beatie, I love you, love you



## THE END OF DREAMS

better than in those other days which were so happy and so hopeful—”

She interrupted him with a nervous gesture.

“Don’t!” she said, sharply.  
“Don’t!”

“I must, Beatie; I can’t help it. This may be my only chance. If you send me away now, you may be sending me to my death.” He shivered a little. “But you will not—I know you will not. You knew I loved you then, and—you loved me. What is so different now, Beatie? Can’t you love me again? Won’t you save me?”

There was no doubting his earnestness. He pleaded for her love as a man pleads for his life. The very feeling in which his words were so rich moved her to a strange sympathy, but—Who was he? That was the question which every



## FOR LOVE—AND LIFE

one of her rapid heart beats pounded into her wondering mind.

“It is foolish,” she said, “for you to talk like that to me. I will not listen to you. And I won’t listen to anything you say until you tell me who you are.”

There was pitiable helplessness, almost despair in his look.

“Oh, Beatie,” he exclaimed, in a voice that trembled, “you know that I am Demas Dayre—Demas who loved you in the college days and who loves you now, and comes to beg you to make his life worth living. With you there would be no more dream horrors, and no—” He checked himself, again shivering.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, Beatie, that I cannot—I cannot live without you.”

She gathered herself determinedly.



## THE END OF DREAMS

"I don't know you," she said, "and I don't understand you. I won't listen to any more of such things. I want you to go away, I never want to see you again."

His face turned ashen, and his knees trembled.

"You don't mean that, Beatie," he gasped. "Surely you don't mean that! You'll give me a chance, at least."

She walked to the door and opened it.

"Please go now," she said, "and never come here again. I won't see you again."

His figure stiffened, and the look in his eyes changed.

"Beatie," he said in a low voice, tender but determined, "you will see me again. I can't give you up, and I won't. Think about the past, Beatie, and what we have been to each other,





PLEASE GO NOW AND NEVER COME HERE AGAIN.







## FOR LOVE—AND LIFE

and when I come again to you with my love and my life—Beatie, then you will listen.”

He passed out of the door, and she sank into a chair sobbing from a fear that she could not understand.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE NOTE BY MESSENGER

**S**HOULD she or should she not write to Demas of her second astounding experience with this unaccountable stranger whose appearance was so familiar and whose knowledge of the past was so disconcerting? That was the question which kept Beatrice awake long after her usual hour for going to sleep that night. Was it not better to keep silent, and try to forget? If she did write she was certain that Demas would come again and make another effort to find the man. Surely it was better that they should never meet. Why, she did not know, but the very



## THE NOTE BY MESSENGER

thought of such a meeting gave her an indefinable feeling of dread. Yet—perhaps something she could tell of the meeting would aid Demas in the solution of the problem with which she felt he was struggling. And she did want to see him, now, she felt, more than ever; there were so many things to talk about.

Before breakfast the next morning she wrote the letter; discreetly, however, with no mention of the fact that the other Demas Dayre had laid his heart at her feet. Even if, because of the peculiar circumstances, she could have brought herself to believe that such a revelation was not a betrayal of the most sacred confidence a woman receives from a man, she could not have mentioned it to Demas at this time—to another, perhaps, or to Demas some



## THE END OF DREAMS

day, but not now. So she dwelt on the strange Demas's earnest effort to convince her that his appearance on the night of the interrupted robbery was the result of a madcap but harmless prank; his surprising knowledge of other days, and his apparently sincere effort to gain her confidence and friendship.

She did not ask him to come, but when she posted the letter so promptly it was with the thought that it would reach him that evening or early the next morning, and that by the next afternoon he would probably be with her. So her singing thoughts were once again with her as she worked at her painting that day, and their notes were more cheerful than ever the next morning when she received a telegram which read:

Will be there this afternoon.



## THE NOTE BY MESSENGER

About five o'clock or very soon after, this meant, she knew; so the rest of the day was of waiting, of rehearsing the story she had to tell so as to put it most clearly, and of wondering, wondering, wondering what it all meant.

Before four o'clock her work was laid aside, before five she was dressed in the way she knew he liked best, and ready to welcome him; and at five there was a ring.

But it was not Demas Dayre that her welcoming smile greeted as she opened the door. It was a messenger boy, short, slouchy and freckle faced, with his uniform cap set rakishly on the side of his head.

"Miss Beetrus Collmer?" he said, inquiringly, holding out a sealed envelope. "Thay's a nanswer," he added, as she took it eagerly.



## THE END OF DREAMS

She recognized the handwriting at a glance, recognized it with such a sudden feeling of apprehension that it was with a great sensation of relief she read:

DEAR BEATIE:

Can't you come down town and take dinner with me this evening? It will help to spend the time pleasantly, and give us the best chance to talk over the many things we have to discuss. If you will come, just tell the messenger "Yes," and he will have a carriage for you at the door in ten minutes. The driver will have his directions, and there will be nothing for you to do but to come. All of which is so easy for you that I am almost sure you will not refuse.

As ever,

DEMAS.

"Yep?" said the boy, owlshly, as she looked up.

"Yes," she replied.

"Awright. Have a coupy at the



## THE NOTE BY MESSENGER

door by the time yer ready. Got th' order fer it here, see?" And giving her a glimpse of another sealed envelope, he slouched off toward the elevator.

Pleasurable excitement possessed her as she turned to get ready. Restaurant dinners were not numerous enough in her life to have lost their charm of novelty; and it would be especially fine to have such a dinner with Demas.

"Mama," she cried, "I'm going down town to take dinner with Demas. He has just come from home, and has sent a carriage for me."

"But, Beatrice, are you sure it will be all right for you to—"

"Of course it will be all right! Why not? Isn't it Demas?"

Even her mother could not attempt to dispute this, and if she had, what difference would it have made, under the



## THE END OF DREAMS

circumstances, to Beatrice or to any other girl who had arrived at the dignity and independence of twenty-eight?

An unexplainable feeling of uneasiness such as had never come to him before seized Demas when he read Beatrice's letter. It was not merely because his mysterious double had presumed to seek her out again—that was bad enough, and its repetition must be prevented in some manner; but it was something else, a presentiment of danger to her through an unknown agency.

The letter was brought to him while he was eating breakfast. When he finished reading it a glance at his watch showed him that he had barely time to make the morning train. He had only to throw a few things into his suit case, and write a hurried note to Forbush.



## THE NOTE BY MESSENGER

"Dear Nace," it read, "I'm off to take another chance on being arrested by Holtsclaw. Please don't forget what I told you about certain papers in my desk in case anything more serious happens to me."

He experienced no relief from his nervous fears as the train sped onward. His one desire now was to reach Beatrice's side as quickly as possible, and assure himself that no harm had come to her. As the train pulled into the station he was standing on the car steps, and before it stopped he swung himself off and ran toward the gates. A moment later he was in a cab urging the driver with liberal promises to hurry to the Mirador apartments. Even the elevator seemed unusually slow in making its flight to the eighth floor, and his heart sank when he saw it was Mrs. Col-



## THE END OF DREAMS

lamer instead of Beatrice who opened the door.

“Why, Demas,” she exclaimed, “what’s the—”

“Where’s Beatrice?” he asked, anxiously, as he stepped into the room.

“Why, I supposed she was with you. How did you happen to miss her?”

“Miss her? What do you mean? Did she go to the station to meet me?”

“Now, Demas, what makes you ask that? Of course not. When she got your note, she got ready right away and went down town in the carriage you sent for her to take her to dinner with you.”

He caught his breath.

“Let me see that note.”

She took it from the table where Beatrice had left it, and handed it to him. As he read it the fear that had



## THE NOTE BY MESSENGER

been growing on him since he had received her letter seemed to become great enough almost to crush him. But—he grasped eagerly at the faint hope—perhaps something would warn her. Controlling himself with an effort so as to alarm Mrs. Collamer as little as possible, he spoke in nearly his usual tone.

“Well, it seems that I did miss her,” he said, “so I’ll go out now and try to find her. In case I miss her again, I wish you would telephone to my hotel as soon as she gets back, and also tell her that I’ll come back after dinner to see her!”

The laggard elevator carried him to the ground floor again, seemingly slower than ever; but as he went out of the front door of the building, he paused.

Which way should he turn?



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE BLIND TRAIL

**S**LOWLY and aimlessly Demas Dayre moved away from the entrance of the Mirador. What should he do? What could he do? He stopped at the corner, and looked about him undecidedly.

“Hello, Cap!”

The voice, confident in its impudence, drew Demas's eyes to the curb. There sat a messenger boy, short, slouchy and freckle faced, with his uniform cap set rakishly on the side of his head. He held in his hand a much tattered copy of an illustrated paper filled mostly with pictures of prize fighters and race horses.



## THE BLIND TRAIL

“Waitin’ fer a car?” the boy went on familiarly. “That’s wot I’m doin’. I’ve missed three already.”

Scarcely hearing what the boy said, and making no answer, Demas looked away again.

“Say, Cap, I hope you ain’t got no grouch, ’cause I done a good job, an’ I t’ink you owe me a good tip fer gittin’ the note there an’ gittin’ the coupy quick, an’ gittin’ her started in good shape.”

Demas’s wandering gaze and thoughts came back to the boy with a snap.

“Did you deliver that note?” he asked, sharply.

“Come off, Cap! Wot’s the matter wid—”

“Where did you get it?”

“Now, w’ere do you s’pose I got it?”



## THE END OF DREAMS

I got it right w'ere you give it to me, at the back door o' Number 437, that's w'ere I got it, see? You ain't gittin' nutty or nothin', are you?"

Why had he not thought of that before? Where would such a man be more likely to hide himself, and where would his machinations receive more support than among such friends?

"Can you get me a cab quick?" he asked.

"Sure I kin git youse a cab quick, if dere's anyt'ing in it."

Demas tossed him a dollar.

"I'll give you another if you get it here quick enough."

"That fer me!" exclaimed the boy, as he set off on a run.

In two minutes he saw a cab turn the next corner at a brisk trot, with the boy standing in the front part making ur-



## THE BLIND TRAIL

gent gesticulations at the driver, supplemented by a voice that was evidently heard and heeded.

“Right on time, Cap!” he cried, as the cab pulled up at the curb, and he leaped out nimbly.

As he gave the cabman the address and stepped into the cab, Demas tossed the boy the promised dollar.

“Yours truly, Cap!” exclaimed the messenger. “Any time you wants any business done in my line, jist lemme know. Insist on havin’ the orig’nal number t’ree toity t’ree—see?” he went on as he pointed to the plate on his cap. “T’ree t’rees in a row. Don’t fergit the sign.” And as the cab was out of hearing by this time, he took out his illustrated paper again, and sat down comfortably on the curb to miss a few more cars.



## THE END OF DREAMS

There was some surprise in Antoine's face as he admitted Demas at the back entrance of Number 437, but, as discretion was his most valuable quality, it was unexpressed.

"I think Miss Garwood is in her sitting room now," he said, in answer to Demas's inquiry. "Will you go up, sir?"

"No; please ask her—Or, yes, I think I shall. Please show me the way."

Again Antoine looked at him almost in surprise, but still he was Antoine, the discreet. With a slight bow he led the way.

Vashti Garwood was never careless of her personal appearance even when she was alone, and expected no one; for, besides having herself to please, she always took possibilities into account.



## THE BLIND TRAIL

Thus, as she lounged in a low easy chair, wearing a light blue kimono and blue slippers, she made a picture that was more than fair—it was alluring.

As Demas appeared in the doorway, she straightened up as if about to speak, and then, by some intuition, checked herself, and looked at him curiously.

“I should like to see the man who calls himself Demas Dayre,” he said, without other greeting, as he entered.

She gave him a slight smile, as he thus so promptly and unquestionably identified himself.

“I’m sorry,” she said, as she settled back in her most graceful attitude, “but he is not here now.”

“When was he here?”

“He was here—last night.”

“And when since then? How long ago did he leave here—if he is gone?”



## THE END OF DREAMS

She hesitated a moment, then answered slowly.

"Your manner, it seems to me, Mr. Dayre, is unpleasantly inquisitorial."

"I don't mean to be offensive, Miss Garwood; but I intend to find that man. If he is here in this house it will save time and possibly trouble for you to say so."

"Trouble?"

"I hope you will not compel me to lay my knowledge of this place before the police."

She laughed softly, and took a cigarette from the stand at her side.

"I don't think you could interest the police in such a subject," she said. "We give them too little trouble, and treat them with too much consideration."

She smiled again as she saw the mus-



## THE BLIND TRAIL

cles of his jaws harden. It was an evidence that he fully realized the truth of her declaration.

“Why is it,” she asked, “that you are so anxious to find Demie just now?”

“I imagine that you know quite as well as I do. And I am confident that he is in this house—and that he did not return alone. If you will not satisfy me that he is not, I can at least obtain a warrant that will permit the search of the premises by officers. That would not be pleasant for either of us, but—”

“It would be extremely unpleasant as well as unnecessary, Mr. Dayre. Sooner than put you to that trouble I will throw open my house to you.”

She touched a bell on the table at her side, and in a moment Antoine appeared.

“Antoine,” she said, “Mr. Dayre



## THE END OF DREAMS

wishes to look over the house carefully. You will show him into every room in it, and open every closet, and do anything else that will assist him in his investigation." She sank back in her chair, and took up a book. "Good-evening, Mr. Dayre," she said, with a smile of dismissal.

Twenty minutes later Demas reëntered his cab as much at sea as he had been when he left the Mirador. Back there he went with a sinking heart; and the anxiety in Mrs. Collamer's face, as she opened the door for him, showed him that his fears were not groundless.

"You didn't find her?" she asked, nervously.

"Not yet, Mrs. Collamer. I just dropped in to see if you are getting along all right. Don't worry. I'm sure no harm has come to her. Beatrice



## THE BLIND TRAIL

is quite capable of taking care of herself, and the distressing mystery will probably soon be explained." He spoke with a confidence that he was far from feeling, and was repaid for the effort by the lightening of Mrs. Collamer's expression.

"Hadn't we better notify the police?" she asked.

"Hardly, yet. It might result in a notoriety that would be unpleasant for both you and Beatrice. I will do nothing else but look for Beatrice until she is safe home again, for no one in the world is dearer to me than she is, Mrs. Collamer."

As the night wore on Demas examined the register of every hospital in the city and the blotter of every police station without finding the slightest evidence to guide him. At three in the



## THE END OF DREAMS

morning, baffled and exhausted, he lay down for a few hours sleep. At eight he called up Mrs. Collamer's flat. It was Dr. Runciman's voice that answered. No, Beatrice had not returned yet, and Mrs. Collamer was almost in a state of collapse. No, not dangerous; her condition was distressing rather than alarming, and the only treatment that would be beneficial was the return of her daughter. Until then he would afford her such relief as he could.

Demas walked almost aimlessly out of the hotel, and turned up the street in the same direction he did on the night he went to Vashti Garwood's. There in the same quiet side street stood the same cab and the same cabman with the bright piggish eyes.

"W'y, good mornin', Mr. Dayre,"



## THE BLIND TRAIL

he said. "I thought you was out in the country. You must 'a' found a buzz wagon to come in on," he chuckled, with no thought of being inquisitive.

Demas did not answer but stood looking at the man with a new rush of thoughts through his mind.

"I s'pose you'll be wantin' to go out ag'in some time to-day?" suggested the driver, with his natural keen outlook for a liberal fare.

Demas hesitated no longer.

"I'll go out now," he said, climbing into the cab.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### IN THE COUPÉ

**B**EATRICE settled herself in the coupé with such a lively sense of anticipatory pleasure that she was almost annoyed at the leisurely way in which the driver, who was a man with small piggish eyes which asked nothing and told nothing, closed the door and mounted his box. Nor could she see why he should not make his lean, thin-limbed bay go faster instead of starting off at such a time-consuming jog trot. She was eager to see Demas again, eager to discuss her own startling experience, and eager, too, perhaps, for the dinner amid the fascination of bright lights and many people.



## IN THE COUPÉ

But pleasant anticipations make time pass quickly, and she had no idea how far she had gone when, shortly after turning the corner into a quieter street, the coupé suddenly pulled up at the curb. Then, before she had time to ask, or even to guess, in her astonishment, what was the matter, the door opened, and Demas Dayre stepped in, and the coupé moved on down the deserted street.

Her exclamation of pleased surprise was broken in half as he closed the door, and sat down beside her, and the chill of fright passed over her.

“What are you doing here? What do you want?” she demanded, tremblingly.

“Only to see you again, and talk to you, Beatie,” he answered, gently.

“Where is—” She stopped, as a



## THE END OF DREAMS

suspicion of the truth flashed over her.

“Did you send this carriage?”

“Of course. You got my note?”

“*Your* note?”

“Yes; I signed it just as I used to; and I’d have thought you would remember my handwriting.”

“Your note,” she repeated, in a half dazed way.

“Yes, Beatie; and when I found you had really come I never was so happy in my life. I knew that when you thought it over you would understand, and would believe me; and—”

“Take me back home!” she commanded. “I didn’t understand. I don’t want to go with you! I won’t—”

“But, Beatie, listen to me. I want to explain, to tell you—”

“Take me back home!” she repeated. “Now!”



## IN THE COUPÉ

“It isn’t fair, Beatie, for you to treat me this way, but—” He leaned out of the window. “Drive over the next cross street,” he said to the driver, “and go back. Understand?”

She did not hear the driver’s response, but the carriage almost immediately turned a corner, and she cheered her courage with the thought that the ordeal would soon be over.

“I meant all I said to you the other afternoon, Beatie,” he was saying. “I love you better than my life, better than anything, better than everything. I want you to be my wife. Surely you can trust me, Beatie. We have known each other ever since we were little more than children. It is what I looked forward to in the old days, and I thought—I was sure you did.”

Shrunk into the corner of the car-



## THE END OF DREAMS

riage, she did not answer. She was merely waiting, waiting to get back home, and to Demas. What would he think when he came and found her gone? She almost forgot her present distress in her agitating wonder. But the note—she had left it on the table. Her mother would show it to him, and he would understand. She must leave the carriage before it reached the Mirador—a block away, two blocks. If these two men met—now—

His pleading tone again forced itself on her attention.

“It means so much to me, Beatie.” There was an entreating tenderness in his voice that was close to tears. “You can hardly understand how much; but as true as I sit here beside you, it means life—or death. With you, Beatie, the



## IN THE COUPÉ

future for me, and for you, is all happiness—and safety. But without you—Oh, it is the turning point, the point from which I must go up or down—down—down—to—” Something like a shudder interrupted him.

“Don’t!” she protested, impatiently. “Don’t talk of such things. I don’t know you. I don’t want to know you. You’re a—”

“Beatie!” His voice rang with reproach.

She settled back in the corner of the coupé. After all it was useless to argue, and much better to keep silent. In a few moments more—

Out of the corner of her eye she saw that he, too, had leaned back. His soft hat lay in his lap, and he held his handkerchief in his hand. The horse was



## THE END OF DREAMS

going at a better pace now, and she thought, with relief, that the worst was over.

Suddenly she leaned forward, and looked out of the window. The houses on each side of the street were farther apart, and she could see that they were approaching wide tracts of vacant land.

With a flare of anger she turned on him.

"Where are you taking me?" she cried. "You are not taking me back!"

"I will take you back in a little while, Beatie. I want to make you understand first—"

"Take me back now! Immediately!"

"Listen, Beatie—"

"Take me back, or I shall go back by myself!"

She half rose, and grasped the handle of the door.



## IN THE COUPÉ

"Just a minute, Beatie," he placed his hand lightly, but detainingly on her arm.

"Don't touch me! Don't touch me, or I'll scream!"

"But, Beatie—"

"You're a coward!"

She had pushed the door open now, and was just about to step out of the moving carriage. Suddenly he crushed the handkerchief in his hand, and dropped it into his hat. As he did so a pungent odor filled the carriage. The next moment he had clasped her round the waist, pulled her back to the seat, and thrust his hat over her face, covering it completely.

She made one supreme effort to scream; then the noise of the grinding wheels became faint and far away, and, with an utter relaxation of her tense



## THE END OF DREAMS

muscles, she lay back in the seat breathing with the long regular cadence of deep slumber.

Once more he leaned out of the window.

“Straight out now, and just as quick as you can make it,” he exclaimed, sharply.

There was no answer but the crack of the whip and the lurch of the carriage as the horse plunged forward.



## CHAPTER XIX

### BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

THE house in which Dutch Heinie lived was rather large for a modest market gardener of simple and thrifty habits with no family other than his wife Lena; but, as he explained to the few persons who commented on the fact "der landt was goodt undt idt was godt adt a bargkain." Another advantage of the place, for its purpose, was that it was not on a main thoroughfare, but on a byway that was little traveled, and stood a long way from a neighbor. As far as the county records showed, the place was the unincumbered property of Dutch Heinie, but at the time it was conveyed to him he



## THE END OF DREAMS

had executed certain obligations to certain people, and in consideration of never being pressed for payment, he was inclined to be unquestionably accommodating.

Nor did he lose anything by this policy. On the contrary, when certain gentlemen found it desirable to disappear from their usual haunts, and remain on the missing list until some unfortunate misunderstanding with the law had blown over and been forgotten or fixed, they paid well for their board and keep during the interval which they spent in seclusion. Likewise it was regarded by the select few who enjoyed its privileges as an excellent place for one, after a shattering period of pleasure, to rest and regain control of his nerves and nerve.

Still, Dutch Heinie's paying guests



## BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

were not frequent, and never numerous, so, on the whole, his pleasant and profitable occupation of raising vegetables for the city market was seldom interrupted by less congenial, if more profitable, work. Nevertheless, it was required by his patrons that the part of the house they used should always be ready for the immediate reception of guests. This was the second story. Extending across the entire front was a large room fitted up much after the manner of the lounging room at a comfortable club, with the addition of a commodious and constantly well-stocked combination sideboard and ice box. From this room two doors opened into the hallway extending across the house and leading to the stairway which could be closed by a substantial door at the top.



## THE END OF DREAMS

On the other side of the hall were two bedrooms, each fitted up with comprehensive appreciation of bachelor conveniences. Between these two chambers was a small unused and unfurnished room, which might have been designed for a dressing room, with doors into each of the bedrooms, and no other openings except three small windows which looked like port holes near the ceiling.

Below, the appointments of the house were much simpler. The stairway ended in a broad center hall which led to the front door. On one side was the parlor, which was the pride of Lena's life, and almost unknown to other human tread than hers on cleaning day; on the other was the bedroom of Dutch Heinie and Lena, and back of these were the dining room and kitchen.



## BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

Beatrice came out of her sleep slowly, and with a depressing languor that made her averse to move. As her faculties gradually asserted themselves she had a vague sense of strange surroundings. Then the memory of her ride in the coupé and her attempt to leave it roused her to a partial realization of her possible position, and she opened her eyes.

Between the whitest and cleanest of draped back muslin curtains the early morning sun was shining into a room that was spotlessly neat and clean, and almost luxurious in its other furnishings. But the growing alarm she felt at the very apparent fact that these furnishings were not feminine in their utility and taste, was relieved when her gaze fell on a woman who was sitting by the window knitting industriously—



## THE END OF DREAMS

a woman of ample girth, with strong arms bare to the elbow, and hands that showed they were familiar with hard work; with a round rosy face, and eyes which, though they may have been a little stupid, were not vicious.

She turned at a movement Beatrice made, and smiled affably.

“Didt you haf a goodt sleebp?” she asked. Her voice had the kindly sympathy of one who speaks to the afflicted, and was at least momentarily reassuring.

“Who are you?”

“Me? Oh, I’m just Lena.”

“What place is this?”

“Dis? Oh, dis iss Heinie’s.”

“Where is it?”

“V’ere? Oh, idt iss yust here.”

“Where is—”

“Yes?”



## BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

“Where is—*he*? ”

“Misdter Tayre? Oh, he iss asleebp already yedt.”

“And where did you— ”

“Oh, I didt noddt sleebp yedt. He told me I musdt sidt here by you all nighdt till you voke ubp, undt I didt.”

Beatrice sat up. She was trembling, but the necessity of controlling herself, of maintaining all her faculties at their best bore strongly upon her.

“I will get up now, if I may,” she said.

“Oh, yes. I am gladdt to see you gedt ubp once. You vas bedter. He saidt he t’ought you wouldt be bedter diesen morgen.”

“Where are my clothes? ”

“In der closedt. I pudt dem dere lasdt nighdt v’en I pudt you to bedt so sigk. Undt now v’ile you are ready



## THE END OF DREAMS

gedting, I vill you some breagkfasdt magke." She rose, and, laying aside her knitting, went to the door. "I vill bringk idt to you righdt here in a chiffy."

She went out closing the door behind her, and Beatrice heard the key turn in the lock. Only then did the full realization of her situation come to her. She was a prisoner! She sprang out of bed and ran to the window. Woods and fields, and not another house in sight! Along the front of the place ran a road with enough grass in it to show that it was not frequently traveled. Where she was, or how far from home, she had no idea.

Despair clutched her heart, and sinking down, she threw herself forward on the floor, burying her face in her arms. Then, presently from out her sobs, rose



## BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

the hope that never dies in youth. She lifted her head, and the tears stopped. Even if she was a prisoner, even if she could not escape, Demas would know, as soon as he arrived, that she was gone, and the note would explain why. With this thought her courage rose. She would get away if she could, and if not would wait with such patience as she might. Demas would come.

She had just finished dressing when the key again turned in the lock, and Lena entered with a tray. Never had she seen a daintier breakfast. The china was the thinnest, the glass the most brilliant, the silver of the most graceful pattern, the napery the snowiest.

“Idt iss der best dishes,” she said, pridefully. “He saidt so.”

Cheered with the hope that was now



## THE END OF DREAMS

strong in her, and her determination to maintain her strength at its best, she ate with an appetite additionally sharpened by the lack of last night's dinner, while Lena beamed on her with a cook's approval.

"Fine!" she exclaimed. "You vill gedt bedter fasdt. V'y, if I didt nodd know I vouldt now nodd tingk dot you vas—" she stopped in some confusion.

"That I was what?" Beatrice spoke with anxious wonder. What did this woman think was the matter with her? What had she been told?

"Dot you vas—vas—nodd very well."

"But I am well!" she protested, nervously. "I'm as well as anybody."

"Yes, yes, I know. You vas all righdt. Didt you like das frühstück?"

"It was very nice," she said, rising. She stood silent a moment, and then



## BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

tried the first test. "I think I shall go out for a while now."

"Nodt yedt, please," responded Lena, apologetically. "He iss nodt ubp yedt already." A vibrating bell sounded somewhere. "Ach! He is ubp yedt! Dot iss for his shafing vasser. I vill come bagk soon," she said, as she hurried out. Again the key turned in the lock.

Beatrice raised the window, and looked out. It was probably eighteen feet to the ground, which sloped sharply away from the house on that side, so that a drop from the window would almost certainly mean a roll over the rough ground to the bottom of the hill. She sighed. It was too hazardous to attempt except in the direst emergency. For nearly an hour she sat and looked out of the window. Not a person or a



## THE END OF DREAMS

vehicle appeared on the road which lost itself in the distant woods.

Then she started apprehensively as heavy steps sounded in the hallway, and she heard the opening and closing of a door near her own. But silence followed until Lena, with a softer tread, came and opened the door.

"He vouldt asgk your bermission for you to see him now," she said, ceremoniously.

Beatrice's indignation flared.

"I will not see him," she declared, hotly, clenching her fists, "now or at any other time, here or elsewhere, if I can help it!"

"Oh, vell, vell, now, ledt us nodt ourselves excidted gedt," said Lena, soothingly. "You yas so much bedter already. I vill tell him, undt idt vill be all righdt, Yes." And again the key



## BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

on the outside of the door turned in the lock.

Once more Beatrice stared out of the window at the far away ground, and once more she felt the sobs begin to choke her, but she forced them back, and called all her courage and hope to her aid. Surely Demas would come.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE EBONY CANE

**I**N a few minutes Lena was back again with an air of diplomatic triumph.

“He has gone to the gardten,” she said, “to vatch Heinie plandt weg’tables seedts, undt schmogke, so you can come indto der frondt room. Ach, idt iss fine in dere, undt you vill ligke idt.”

She threw open the door, and Beatrice followed her across the hall distrustfully, yet eagerly. In the front room Lena spoke proudly, with a wave of her pudgy arm.

“Idt iss fine, ain’dt idt? Der beautiful chairs undt rugks undt efryting. Idt iss all for you now to please do vith.



## THE EBONY CANE

Der boogks undt magkazines undt— undt efryting. If you see vot you don't vant, undt you vill ringk dot button bell dere den I vill bringk idt to you."

"I would rather go outdoors," said Beatrice, still tremulous.

"Ach, nodd yedt."

"I must go out!" she cried, in a mixture of fear and indignation. "Why can't I go out?"

"You vas nodd vell enough to go oudt of doors already. Budt in a lidtle v'ile—Oh, you vill gedt quigk bedter here, undt den—v'y—oh, yes."

The faint spark of hope that glowed in Beatrice's heart when Lena went out leaving the door open behind her was quickly extinguished as she heard her close and lock the door at the head of the stairway as she went down. She



## THE END OF DREAMS

sighed helplessly, near to tears, and went to one of the front windows. Here the ground below was level, but it was a long drop, full of possibilities of fractures and sprains. And even if she alighted unhurt, what could she do? The little-used road in front of the place was still deserted; beyond it, as on the other side of the house, were open fields and woodlands, and not another building to be seen.

With a lump in her throat that was half choking her she turned almost hopelessly away from the window. But she must not give up hope. She must not give up her vigilance! She must be ready for any opportunity that offered. Her wandering gaze fell on the books and magazines. Both were mostly of the sporting variety, but there were half a dozen or more of the latest popular



## THE EBONY CANE

novels. Her nerves were on edge. Anything that could distract her thoughts from her position even temporarily might help to maintain her courage. She took up a book, and sat down in one of the big easy chairs to try to read.

But she did not see the printed page. Where was she? How far from home? What could she do? These were the questions that constantly rang in her brain. The thought of why she was there only brought forth a shudder. Since she had awakened she had been treated with the utmost consideration and courtesy, but—How long would it last? She had not seen—him—yet. A chill went through her at the thought; yet even in her agitation, her courage did not fail her. There must be some turn of events to her advantage—she



## THE END OF DREAMS

knew it, she felt it! But for the present she could only wait—and hope. Determinedly she fixed her eyes on the printed page, and read, read every word and turned page after page with not the slightest idea of what she was reading. Her thoughts were far away. Where was Demas now?

Suddenly she heard the key turn in the lock of the stairway door, heard it with a feeling of careless welcome, for Lena, in her desire to serve and to please, was not unpleasant company, and, in a way, her presence gave some temporary feeling of safety. Perhaps—the thought lent new hope to her heart-beats—she could gradually persuade Lena—

“Good morning, Beatie.”

He stood in the doorway, fresh and smiling, and looking better than she had



## THE EBONY CANE

ever seen him look before, but her repugnance was none the less. In her alarm she started suddenly to her feet. As she did so her body struck with some force against the table by her side, and a heavy ebony walking stick, with an ornate silver head, rolled off and fell to the floor.

He picked it up, and laid it on the table again. As he approached she drew away from him, and stood by the open window, alert, and with nerves and muscles tense.

“I have come to ask you very humbly to forgive me for—last night, Beatie,” he said, still standing by the table. “But—I could not help it. If you could only understand how I—love you! You must know that I wouldn’t harm you and that I would not let any one else harm you as long as I had a breath



## THE END OF DREAMS

of life left to fight for you. You are as safe here as in your own home."

She almost feared to trust her voice in reply, and yet she felt that she must not let him see that she was afraid.

"Safe?" she repeated in a tone of scorn which she hoped masked her agitation. "From thieves? From a thief who does his miserable work at night?"

He flushed and paled, and even shrank as if he had received a blow.

"Don't, Beatie, please," he said, almost pitifully. "Haven't you made me suffer enough already for that wild bit of folly?"

She did not answer.

"And yet," he went on, "I found you by it—found you at a time when I longed for you most, when I needed you most. Surely, Beatie, you cannot go on scorning such a love as I offer you.



## THE EBONY CANE

You are everything to me, and I would do anything in the world to serve and please you."

"Let me go home, then."

He drew a long breath as if he fully understood how patient he must be with her.

"Beatie," he said, "I only want a chance to convince you of my devotion. When I have done that I am sure you will—"

"*Oh!*" In the half suppressed cry that she gave was mingled relief, hope, exultation; and yet in it, too, was a note of alarm—for what might not happen now?

He sprang to the window at her side. A cab had stopped in front of the house, and a man was getting out of it. With a smothered oath, he pushed her quickly backward, and out of sight. His hand



## THE END OF DREAMS

flew to his hip, and as he brought it forth a revolver glistened in it.

Her piercing scream and the shot sounded together, and the glass in the side on One-Eyed John's cab was shattered. The passenger who had sprung out looked up, and started for the house on a run.

Again the man at the window raised his revolver, and Beatrice sprang at him fiercely in a futile attempt to arrest the shot. With a quick shove he sent her staggering half way across the room, and against the table. As her hand grasped it to steady herself it fell on the heavy ebony cane.

Almost wild with terror at the danger her Demas was in, she grasped the cane in both hands, and, lunging forward, brought it down with all the added strength that frenzy gave her on



## THE EBONY CANE

the head of the would-be murderer just as his second shot rang out.

The revolver fell from his hand, he half turned toward her and then fell, face downward, on the floor, and lay there as if he were dead.

With one terrified glance at him, she darted into the hall and—Thank God! The door of the stairway was ajar! She flung it open and ran down the steps just as Demas was pushing open the front door.

Through the door in the back of the hall came the ponderously hurried steps of Dutch Heinie, with wonder staring from the usually expressionless eyes that looked out barely above his heavy brush of beard. Behind him was Lena with a wet plate in one hand and a dish towel in the other.

The cry Beatrice gave startled them



## THE END OF DREAMS

still more, as she rushed down the steps and threw herself into Demas's arms.

"Oh, Demas, Demas, save me!" she cried, half sobbing. "Take me away from here! Take me home!"

He held her closely to his breast, and glanced about him quickly and apprehensively, expecting further attack, but none came.

"Iss der anyting der madter, Misdter Tayre?" asked Heinie, with phlegmatic interest.

Demas hesitated a moment before answering while many thoughts passed through his mind. Better wait, was his conclusion. Beatie's safety was the first consideration now.

"No," he said, steadily. "I guess not."

"I t'oughdt I heardt some shodts now," said Heinie, doubtfully, for it



## THE EBONY CANE

was not his business to inquire into the affairs of his guests too closely.

“Yes,” agreed Demas; “they sounded as if they were out there in front of the house.”

Beatrice still clung to him closely.

“Demas, take me away, now, quick!” she cried, fearfully. “We must hurry! Oh, let’s go—go!”

He took her up in his arms, and walked rapidly back to the cab. Then pausing just long enough for a word to the driver, he stepped into the cab with her still in his arms, and the horse started at a rapid pace.

“I guess she godt vell predty quigk all righdt already yedt,” said Lena, as she went back to her dish washing.



## CHAPTER XXI

### WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

**I**T was half past five that afternoon when Antoine opened the door in answer to Demas's ring.

"Miss Garwood is expecting you, sir," he said.

Demas looked at him curiously; it was evident that Antoine did not know the difference, whatever he might suspect from his previous day's experience. The circumstances, however, served Demas's purpose just now quite as well.

"She instructed me to ask you to go right up, sir," Antoine went on, relieving Demas of his hat and coat with the unobtrusive skill born of natural talents and long practice.



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

Student of artistic effects that she was, Vashti had taken care not to hear Demas's tread on the thick carpet of the hallway, and permitted him to gaze at her for a moment or two from the open doorway before she looked up. Again the curtains had been drawn, and she lounged in the same attitude of graceful negligence she had assumed the evening before. But now the kimono and slippers were yellow, and there was a large yellow rose in her hair, a costume even more effective than the blue—which, in itself, showed that Vashti was expecting somebody.

Finally she looked up, nicely opening her eyes a little wider in an expression of surprise which quickly changed to a welcoming smile. And there was no hesitation or doubt in her manner when she spoke.



## THE END OF DREAMS

"You come softly, Mr. Dayre," she said, holding out her hand to him with the curved wrist higher than the gracefully drooping fingers. Then with a slight and equally graceful gesture of her other hand, she added: "The easiest chair in the room awaits."

"I was told when I got here that you were expecting me, but—"

"Antoine is ever tactful," she smiled; "and as truthful as he is discreet and reliable."

"Why?"

"It is the way he holds my confidence and his place—"

"I thought you would understand me."

"Perhaps," she smiled again, quizzically, "I did."

"Then why—"

Her smile changed to a light rippling



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

laugh, and she shrugged her shoulders slightly.

"When a woman evades a question," she said, "it means that you must not ask her things, but tell her things."

Demas leaned back in his chair.

"Very well, then," he said. "I found the man who calls himself Demas Dayre."

"You saw him?"

"No."

"Then it was not you," she said, looking at the heavy bracelet she was slowly turning on her arm, "who hit him?"

"No," he replied, looking straight at her as if trying to read her thoughts, now further concealed by her lowered lashes. "May I ask how you knew that he was hit?"

"Oh, quite naturally. There is a



## THE END OF DREAMS

telephone, you know; and I went out with the surgeon in his auto."

"And his condition is—"

"Still rather dazed when I saw him; but the doctor said there was no fracture, and that he was merely stunned. He will have a somewhat uncomfortable week or ten days, and then—it will be merely an unpleasant and strange memory."

"Thank you," said Demas, rising. "I had feared that perhaps—"

"It might be worse?"

"Well—yes."

"And you feared?"

"Naturally."

She laughed a little.

"All men are created free and equal—and different," she said. "Sit down again, please. Maybe I shall think of something you can tell me in exchange



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

for the reassuring information I have given you."

"I am at your service."

She busied herself a moment lighting a cigarette. Then she spoke with evident deliberation.

"If a man had tried twice to kill me," she said, "I don't think I should fear that he might have been killed."

"Circumstances," replied Demas, briefly, "alter cases."

She raised her eyebrows a trifle, momentarily.

"To be sure," she said. "It was all arrant folly. Lately it seems to me that sometimes Demie is not quite—well, discreet. But—" she paused, and again spoke with deliberation—"if it were directly between you and him, wouldn't you, after what has passed, kill him?"



## THE END OF DREAMS

"No." He spoke decidedly. "I think I understand, and do not wholly blame him for the attempts he has made on my life. I have no desire to kill him. I merely want to meet him face to face, and eye to eye, by ourselves, in some room with closed doors. When that time comes—and it will come!—not a blow will be struck by either of us, but a conclusion will be reached quickly and completely, and there will be no further—misunderstandings."

There was an undercurrent of mystery in his words that piqued her while it baffled her.

"It might be arranged," she said, slowly.

"You would place me under lasting obligations if you could manage to arrange it."

Again she laughed in her peculiar



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

mocking, but not unpleasant or irritating way.

“There is nothing quite so ephemeral as lasting obligations,” she said.

“But, of course, we shall have to wait until Demie’s head gets well.”

“He will stay—out there?”

“You will not undertake to meet him there, will you, while he is disabled?”

“No; but it is some satisfaction to me to know where he is when it is possible.”

There was something of approval in her smile.

“He will stay there, I think,” she said. “It is a good place.”

“What kind of a place is it, if I may ask?”

The slight shrug again moved her shoulders.

“It is a retreat, a rest cure, a place where one can go in time of need, and,



## THE END OF DREAMS

for a while, be forgotten; and, if one is lucky, perhaps forget."

He studied her eyes as she said this. In them were traces of bitter memories; then they were again smiling at him in the same mildly cynical way as before.

"Do you ever want to forget?" he asked.

"Sometimes," she admitted, with the cynicism of her smile perhaps increasing; "but it is a difficult thing; few achieve it. May I offer you a glass of wine?"

"No, I thank you."

"You don't drink?"

"Sometimes."

"But not in my house? It is not a compliment."

"It was not meant to be otherwise."

"I suppose not. The bitterest truths are usually well meant. At least you'll



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

take a cigarette," she said, pushing the bowl toward him.

He took one, and lighted it.

"I would ask you a question," he said, "if I were sure you would not take offense."

"Never—where none is intended. But I do not promise to answer."

"I have been wondering for some time why a woman of your taste, culture, refinement and beauty is—here."

She bowed low in her chair, and then lifted her head with a mocking smile.

"You are more appreciative than I had hoped," she said; "but why put a sting in the tail of your compliment?"

"Then I am to understand that you do not care to answer such a question?"

She took a long slow puff at her cigarette.

"Well, no," she said; "not in detail.



## THE END OF DREAMS

Speaking in a general way, though, I'll say that even the best efforts of the young ladies' seminary cannot invariably remove the unconventional from one's blood."

"It is unfortunate."

"Perhaps—I don't know. My life is entertaining, easy and pleasant—now; pleasanter than it was in what you doubtless regard as better days. Can I satisfy your curiosity in any other way?"

"Um-m-m, yes. How long have you known the man who calls himself Demas Dayre."

"Eight years, or more."

"And when you first met him he was—"

"Much what he is now. Demie doesn't change a great deal. In fact, there has been a greater change in him



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

during the last two months than in all the previous time—and not for the better. Any other questions?” The mocking smile held its place.

“Just one. How did you happen to be so far away from your—base of operations as you were the first time I saw you?”

“I lived in that town once—more years ago than I care to remember; and an unexplainable longing to see some of the old places came over me. I don’t think I shall permit myself to have it again. And now I shall ask you a question. What is there between you and the man who is so much like you that one cannot tell you apart?”

“You must not consider me churlish, Miss Garwood, but I cannot answer that question now. Perhaps there will be an answer that you will understand



## THE END OF DREAMS

when the time comes that we shall meet face to face."

"And eye to eye?"

"And eye to eye—that is also important."

"Then I must strive to bring that about if I can. My curiosity is excited."

"At any time and any place where he and I can have a room to ourselves for a few moments."

"I will not say that I will bring it about, for that would sound boastful—and it is unbecoming for a woman to boast of what she will do with men; but perhaps I shall."

Again Demas rose.

"And I will thank you in advance," he said. "It is barely possible that I may not be able to do so afterward. In which case the thanks will be due and



## WHEN A WOMAN IS CURIOUS

doubtless will be forthcoming from—him. And now, with thanks also for the courtesy you have shown me, I'll say good-bye."

"Perhaps," she said, rising, "the obligation is mine. You have given me a rare quarter of an hour, Mr. Dayre, and one that I shall not forget. It has been a long, long time since I have had the same kind of pleasure in a call, and it has been almost like revisiting other days."

She stood gripping the curtains tightly as she listened to his muffled footfalls descending the stairs. Then, when she heard Antoine close the door behind him, she raised her clenched fists to her forehead.

"What is it? What is it?" she exclaimed. "I *will* make them meet!"



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE WARNING

VASHTI GARWOOD was not a woman who wasted time. She struck when she thought the iron was hot, if the sledge were available. Thus it was that she arrived at Dutch Heinie's about eleven o'clock the next morning in a hired automobile with a chauffeur who took more pride and pleasure in speed than in discretion; somewhat dishevelled as to veils and even hair, but exhilarated from her clearly hazardous sprint of ten miles in the bracing air of the fresh May morning. She did not run the machine clear up to the entrance path, but had the chauffeur stop a hun-



## THE WARNING

dred yards away in the shelter of a convenient clump of roadside trees and walked the rest of the distance.

Lena opened the door for her—not the tranquil eyed Lena of a few days before, but a woman who wore an expression of haunting fear and suspicion, and who from time to time glanced suddenly and apprehensively over her shoulder, as if she expected to see something unwelcome; for Lena had not yet got over the nervous shock of seeing a man drive away in a cab, and then, fifteen minutes later, finding the same man lying senseless in the big room upstairs. “Idt iss nodt so!” she declared to herself, but her very eyes had given the lie to the reasonableness of her determination, and now she trembled fearsomely when alone.

“How is Mr. Dayre this morning?”



## THE END OF DREAMS

asked Vashti, unswathing herself from her veils.

"He iss—all righdt—I guess," responded Lena, hesitatingly, for she did not go near her guest when she could avoid it.

Vashti hung her wraps as best she could on the imitation black walnut hat-rack with its impracticable pegs.

"He is up and dressed?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; he iss ubpstairs in der bigk room now."

"Then go on with your work, Lena, and don't bother about me. I'll go up," she said, starting up the stairs.

Demas Dayre, sitting with his elbows on his knees, and his face in his hands, did not hear her step on the stairs, so he looked up in a dazed way when he heard his name spoken—softly so as not to startle him. Besides his bluish discolor-



## THE WARNING

ation reaching down over the left side of his forehead from the effect of the blow of the cane, his eyes were blood-shot and his face was haggard.

“Hello, Vashti!” he said, rather feebly. “I guess I’m glad to see you.”

“Well, I like that!” she exclaimed, coming in and drawing up a chair near him. “After my taking my life in my hands and a buzz wagon just to come out and see how you are getting along.”

He smiled wanly, but did not answer.

“What’s the matter now?” she demanded. “Inside, I mean; I can see the outside marks all right, but that doesn’t account for it.”

He threw himself back in his chair, and dropped his arms to his sides helplessly.

“I’m all in, Vashti,” he said, in a tone of despair.



## THE END OF DREAMS

“What do you mean?”

“Just that. In less than a week I’ll not be”—he hesitated and brought out the word reluctantly—“anywhere.”

“Oh, cheer up, Demie!” she exclaimed, hopefully. “I can see from the marks that it must have been an awful jolt, but you’ll be all right again in a week; and everywhere you want to be instead of not anywhere.”

He shook his head mournfully, and buried his face in his hands again.

“The dreams came while I was lying there unconscious,” he said, “and again last night—Oh, worse than ever! I saw it all—how it is going to be. And it is going to be soon, and”—he lowered his voice, and looked about him fearfully—“here, I think. I’ll never leave this place, either alive or dead.”

Vashti’s sympathies were with him,



## THE WARNING

but his utter lack of spirit, his unreasoning fear, made them scant at that moment. Something must be done, she thought, to stimulate his courage and lend resilience to his spirits; and bottom facts were what she needed to work with.

“Is it the girl?” she asked, after a pause.

“She hit me,” he replied, almost with a groan.

“Oh, well—”

“If she is against me like that, what can I hope?”

“Good Lord, Demie, I never knew you to take a girl so seriously before. It might be squared with her, and, if not, she isn’t the only girl in the world.”

“She’s the only—Oh, you don’t understand.”

“No; but I’m willing to.”



## THE END OF DREAMS

“With her, I’d not be afraid; but if she won’t stand by me, if I don’t have her to keep him off, I’ll—” He slumped down in his chair with his chin on his breast.

“Well, tell me all about it. Maybe I can help—”

“I’m almost beginning to think, Vashti,” he went on, in a broken voice, as if he had not heard her, “that maybe it is all right, that I ought to be the one—” Again he did not finish.

Vashti took a long breath and compressed her lips. There was no use trying to talk to him now. The blow over the head had evidently jarred him more than she thought and she would have to give him a few days to recover his poise before she could begin to straighten things out and solve the mystery of the relationship between the two men.



## THE WARNING

Now he had sunk into what appeared to be almost a stupor, with his chin still on his breast and his arms hanging listlessly at his sides.

She walked over and stood by the window, looking out carelessly, while she futilely turned the problem over in her mind. Suddenly she raised her head, and a look of interest succeeded the one of absorption.

From the clump of roadside trees where she had left her automobile a bicycle emerged and came toward the house. Riding it was a messenger boy, short, slouchy and freckle faced, with his uniform cap set rakishly on the side of his head. He got off his wheel in front of the house, and for a moment stood contemplating it studiously as if he were comparing it with mental notes of description; then leaning the bicycle



## THE END OF DREAMS

against a tree, he came straight for the front door.

"Were you expecting a messenger, Demie?" Vashti asked, looking around.

Apparently he did not hear her, for he did not answer, and still sat as before wrapped in the gloom of his forebodings. She turned again to the window, and leaned out. Lena was just opening the front door.

"Fer Mr. Demas Dayre," said the boy, taking an envelope from his book.

"Gif idt to me," said Lena, extending her hand for it.

"Nix fer you, frau!" he exclaimed, taking a step backward, and holding it behind him. "I gives it to nobody but him hisself, that's what, see? Stric' orders, an' them orders goes wid me, fer the bloke dat sent it is all to the velvet."

"I vill gif idt to him."



## THE WARNING

"Nit, never! I'll do the job meself. Show me the party."

"Budt he iss ubp stairs, undt sigk."

"Well, I kin climb, an' I ain't afraid o' no disease that any old doctor ever invented. Where's yer stairs?" He came forward aggressively, and Lena gave way involuntarily before him. "Oh, dere dey are! W'y, dem's easy. W'ich room?"

"Der frondt room," Lena replied, abashed at the messenger's assurance, and yet with a guilty feeling that she was not doing her whole duty.

"All right. Don't worry about me. T'anks fer yer court'sy." And he started up the stairs at the leisurely gait of his guild.

Vashti met him at the door.

"Give me the note," she said.

"'Scuse me," he said. "Sorry to haf



## THE END OF DREAMS

to hand de marble heart to a lady, but orders is orders." And with a clever side step, and a surprisingly quick forward movement, he passed by her into the room.

As he entered, Demas raised his head with the stupidly surprised look of one who is just awakening to strange happenings. The boy stood, open mouthed, and stared at him.

"Say-y-y!" he exclaimed. "You ain't his twin brother nor nothin', are you?" And without further inquiry he handed the note to Demas.

Demas took it indifferently, and held it in his hand listlessly without looking at it.

"Well," said the boy, "is there goin' to be a nanswer?"

Roused by the question, Demas gazed at the note. Vashti watched him



## THE WARNING

closely, and saw that he began to tremble as he read the address.

"Vashti," he gasped, "it's from him!"

Her suspicions were confirmed, and she acted promptly.

"Here!" she exclaimed, turning to the boy, and handing him a dollar. "There won't be any answer. Mr. Dayre is too sick to be bothered. Off with you!" And she shoved him into the hallway.

He went, but he went reluctantly, as if he were afraid he was missing something interesting. Vashti heard him descend the stairs slowly, and Lena let him out the front door. Then she ran to the window to watch his departure, for she wanted no strange witness of Demas's weakness.

As the boy was about to mount his



## THE END OF DREAMS

bicycle, he looked up and saw her at the window.

"T'anks, lady," he called, throwing a kiss to her; "t'anks fer de plunk." Then he swung into the saddle, and pedaled off down the road whistling cheerfully.

She turned again to Demas. He still sat trembling, with the note unopened in his hand.

"Read it," she commanded, tersely.

He tried to open the envelope, but his fingers were too unsteady.

"Read it for me, Vashti, please," he said, pitifully, holding it out to her.

Quickly she drew the note from its envelope, and, with a hasty glance at his fear-strained face, read aloud:

DEMAS DAYRE:

You have fired three shots and have thrown a deadly missile at me, but you will never make



## THE WARNING

another attempt on my life. The difference to be settled between you and me is not a matter for murder. But you know and I know that we cannot go on as we are. I will give you a week to recover your strength and nerves, and then I intend to find you. All that is necessary, as you know well enough, is for us to meet face to face, and alone. Everything then will be settled without effort or even action on the part of either of us. I know this and so do you.

DEMAS DAYRE.

As she finished reading, and looked up, Demas collapsed in his chair in a dead faint.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE DAY BEFORE

EVERY day Vashti Garwood made the trip to Dutch Heinie's, and every day she went away more puzzled at Demas's mood and condition. The visible and physical effects of the blow he had received passed away rapidly, but with their passing he did not regain the vigor and spirits that were characteristic of the past. Frequently he hardly raised his head when she came, and would only give answers in monosyllables to her most skillfully leading questions.

"You need a tonic or something to build you up, Demie," she urged.



## THE DAY BEFORE

"Why not try a change of scene and air? Go away to some place."

He shook his head.

"No," he said, "I'll wait here."

"Wait? What for?"

He gave her no answer, but sat with his chin in his hand, moodily staring out of the window with eyes that saw things which were not there.

The doctor, to whom Vashti talked confidentially, however, did not regard the case seriously.

"No permanent or even prolonged bad effects could result from the injury," he declared, positively. "It was not a crushing, or what could really be called a hard blow, and merely happened to strike him in a way that stunned him. I should diagnose his present condition as a form of melancholia resulting from some previous



## THE END OF DREAMS

distress of mind, of which he has not informed us. It may take time, but it will be sure to wear off. Doubtless the time could be shortened if his interest could be aroused in some pleasure or work. But as this seems to be impossible, we can only be patient with him, and trust the excellent care and food and the fresh air here to bring about his recovery gradually. Organically he is healthy, and within a week or so I hope to see a decided improvement in his condition."

Within a week or so? What had that note said about a week? Something was to happen within that time which would mean much to one or both of the Demas Dayres.

Vashti was eager to see the Demas Dayre who wrote the note. Evening after evening she sat in her most ef-



## THE DAY BEFORE

fective negligé waiting for him to appear, but he did not come. Finally she sent a note to his hotel.

“I shall be at home at half past five this evening,” she wrote. “Perhaps if you would come in for a few moments we could give each other some information that would be worth while.”

As he bowed before her, she marked for the first time a distinct difference between the two men. This one was prompt and decisive in tone and movement, with clear eyes that were positive and full of determination.

“You will sit down, Mr. Dayre?” she said.

“Yes,” he answered, with unflattering frankness, “but it is hardly worth while. I can give myself the pleasure of only a very short call. May I inquire after the patient? Is he better?”



## THE END OF DREAMS

"Yes—and no. The injury to his head has been cured, but—I don't know. He suffers from terrible moodiness and depression. The doctor says he is not really sick from any ailment except nerves, and that will cure itself in time. But—I don't understand it."

Demas nodded without speaking.

"I don't understand it," she repeated, catching his eye and holding it for a moment.

"Nervous diseases are frequently very puzzling," he said.

For a moment she was silent, and then she spoke more tensely than usual.

"Have I not some rights in this matter?" she demanded. "I have known Demie for years. He has been my friend, and I have been his, at times when friendship was needed; and he is my business partner. I have known



## THE DAY BEFORE

you only a short time, but under peculiar circumstances; and I know you are a gentleman—such as some of my friends, I must admit, are not. What is there between you and Demie? Is it the fag end of a family feud? Are you twin brothers who quarreled irreconcilably early in life?”

“Neither,” he answered, positively. “I never saw him in my life; and we are not related, as relationship is reasonably considered.”

She looked at him with parted lips.

“As relationship is reasonably considered?” she repeated. “Is there something that—is difficult to explain—that you think I could not or would not understand or believe?”

Demas rose, and stood looking down at her.

“It is something that is difficult to



## THE END OF DREAMS

explain, and so still more difficult to believe that I think it is better not to go into it—now,” he said.

“The week is up,” she ventured, anxiously. “When are you going to see him?”

“Is he still where he was?”

She nodded.

“And will he stay there?”

“Till you come—I am sure of it.”

“Then I will go there to-morrow.”

She started nervously.

“Will there be—”

“I will go unarmed and unaccompanied into the house.”

“And what will happen?”

“By to-morrow evening we shall know.”

As he bowed and left her, she sank back in her chair trembling, and Vashti Garwood was not a woman who trem-



## THE DAY BEFORE

bled often. But for all that, her mind was made up to see what happened at Dutch Heinie's the next day.

It was late that evening when Demas rose to leave the Collamer flat. As Beatrice stood beside him, he turned suddenly, and took both her hands in his.

"Beatie," he said, with a slight smile that lent eloquence to simple words, "I'm sure I don't need to tell you that I love you. You must know that. I loved you in the old days at college, and I've loved you ever since—only more. It was because I loved you so much that I went away from you then without speaking. Something happened that made me fear to tell you so; something that I could not explain then, and cannot explain this evening, but—"



## THE END OF DREAMS

"I do not ask you to explain, Demas," she said, with a look in her eyes that spoke of fond and unswerving confidence.

"But I must explain before I can— To-morrow, Beatie, I think all the doubts and fears and distresses of ten years will end; and if all goes well with me, I am coming to-morrow evening, Beatie, to explain it all, and to ask you to be my wife. Will you think it over till then, Beatie, and try to persuade yourself to sympathize with me?"

"Yes, Demas," she said, softly, "I will try."

With a quick breath, he caught her in his arms, held her tightly for a dozen kisses, and was gone.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE GATHERING STORM

**A**FTER a night of more wakefulness than sleep, Vashti Garwood rose with a feeling of oppression which was intensified by the sultry heavy atmosphere that foretold a storm. There was no glare of sunshine to greet her when she threw back the curtains, and she looked out on a sky that hung low with increasing banks of clouds.

But it was something more than the gloomy morning that kept far from her the usually careless thoughts with which she took her coffee and rolls. Demas Dayre had been her friend and she his in times of misfortune and stress; and however wrong he might



## THE END OF DREAMS

have been, however unfair—she balked at the word “cowardly” because of the memory of him in braver moments—had been his attacks on the other Demas, the obligation of friendship now called to her insistently. He was threatened with a danger which she divined rather than understood, and it was her duty to warn him, and to protect him, if possible. As soon as she could get ready she called a cab, and started for Dutch Heinie’s.

The sky seemed to swing lower and lower during the ten-mile drive, and though it was about eleven o’clock when she reached the house, the gloom of the day made it seem as if it might be half an hour after sunset. Lena, with a troubled face, met her at the door.

“Is Mr. Dayre up? How is he this morning?” she asked anxiously.



## THE GATHERING STORM

“He vas ubp before me already,” Lena replied, dejectedly; the burden of Demas’s uncanny presence and gloomy ways bore more heavily on her every day. “He is nodt so goodt diesen morgen, I t’ink.”

“Where is he now?”

“In der bigk room.”

“I’ll go up.” And Vashti hurriedly tossed aside her wraps, and ascended the stairs.

She found him slumped far down in an easy chair by the table with his chin against his breast as if he might be asleep. To him the night had been one of horror, and he had watched for the coming of daylight with longing yet hopeless eyes. Twice had the dreams come to him with a vividness that exceeded all of his former harrowing experiences. First, it had been of the old



## THE END OF DREAMS

days at college when the world was fair, when ambition was strong, and when the future was all for Beatie; then came the parting which he could not understand, the leaving behind of Beatie and ambition, the wandering in strange places and doing strange things; and after that his dream turned to his former dreams, and the gradual realization, fought off to the last moment of conviction, and hopelessly even after that, of what he was and what the future might bring to him.

He awoke with a cry, and sat up in bed trembling, fearing for the moment that the very darkness about him was the oblivion from which his soul shrank. Then through the open window he caught sight of the faintly lighter sky, with one star. Even as he gazed at it, thankful for the reassurance it gave



## THE GATHERING STORM

him, it faded away, and only blackness remained.

With a shudder he got out of bed, and putting on his dressing gown sat down by the window, heedless of the chill of the night. Already the clouds had begun slowly to mass for the coming storm; and as he sat there, and watched the stars disappear, one by one, he felt that each, with its passing, took something of his life.

Finally, when they were all gone, his eyes, weary of the blackening sky, closed, and he slept. Again dreams possessed him, but this time they were of the present, of the danger threatening him now, which he was powerless to avert. It came straight at him, inevitably; there was no way to escape, not even a way to turn aside for a moment, no respite. Nearer and nearer it came



## THE END OF DREAMS

until it was right upon him. There was a blinding flash of light, a crash, and then—

Again he woke with a cry. He was dripping with perspiration, and trembling with terror. The slight breeze that came through the window chilled him to the marrow, but at first he was hardly conscious of it. Finally his staring eyes caught in the clouds the first grey touches of the dawn, and watching it, urging it on with his hopes, he almost forgot his fear of the day in his wish for it.

Presently he became aware that he was chilled through and shivering, and got up and dressed. Again he returned to the window to watch the light's slow gathering of strength, while he smoked steadily to prevent his going to sleep again.



## THE GATHERING STORM

Lena, uneasy at not hearing his morning ring, found him so. He declined breakfast, but she brought him coffee, which grew cold before he drank it. But it steadied him a little, and lent him enough momentary energy to go into the front room.

He rolled his eyes up indifferently as Vashti entered, but hardly moved his head.

"Aren't you any better this morning, Demie?" she asked, very quietly, almost tenderly.

"No."

"I'm sorry. You must—"

"What difference does it make?" He spoke wearily, and slumped even lower in his chair.

It seemed to her that with all his bulk and strength, he looked frailer than she had ever seen him before, and that he



## THE END OF DREAMS

was hardly more than a shadow of his real self. Even the brief glimpse of his eyes she had, showed that they were changed, and now had an unnatural and far-away look.

“Demie,” she said, earnestly, and with a depth of feeling that was strange to her, “you must get away from here. You are not only getting no better, but it is—making you worse.”

He shook his head moodily without looking up.

“Yes,” she said, determinedly, “you must. Any place will do. Go wherever you like. I’ve brought plenty of money for you—it’s yours as much as mine, for it’s from the game; and I can drive you in the cab to some station near here where you can catch a train. You can even make up your mind



## THE GATHERING STORM

where you want to go after you get on the train, and—”

“I won’t go—any place,” he said, doggedly.

“Oh, Demie, you must, you must!” Her voice rose to a cry, and came close to breaking.

He looked at her a moment with eyes that were inscrutable.

“I am not going, Vashti,” he said, quietly, and in a monotonous tone. “Go back to the game, and look after things there, and don’t bother about me.” He had looked away from her, but his eyes sought hers again, as he added: “I’m going to give you my share in the game, Vashti. After this, it’s yours.”

His words sent a chill through her.

“Don’t talk that way, Demie!” she cried, trembling. “You don’t know



## THE END OF DREAMS

what you're saying. Your nerves are gone altogether, and you're sick and weak, and—"

"Weak?" he repeated, with a tinge of scorn. He rose and came straight to her. She paled with fear, and was tempted to fly or scream, but—it was Demie; what should she fear?

With a quick movement he caught her up, and then settling her on one arm held her as one would a child.

"Weak?" he repeated. "The nerves are in a bad way maybe, Vashti, but I'm not a physical wreck."

Then he set her down gently, and went back to his chair.

"It makes no difference, Demie," she insisted, "you must go—*now!* Go somewhere, anywhere, to get away from here quick."

"Why?"



## THE GATHERING STORM

The question, inevitable as it was, seemed to take her by surprise.

“Because—” She hesitated, and a sob broke from her. “Because you are not safe here.”

“Why?”

She was driven into a corner. She would not have told him if she could avoid it, but there seemed to be no other way.

“He — is coming — here — to-day,” she said slowly.

He seemed to be sitting straighter in his chair when she looked up at him, and his head was no longer bowed.

“I know it,” he said, quietly. “I am waiting for him.”



## CHAPTER XXV

### FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

WITH all the joy that throbbed in Beatrice Collamer's heart, there was a feeling of fear that she could not put away from her. What was Demas going to do? Again and again she asked herself the question, and the only answer that suggested itself but served to increase her fears. Why had she not found out before he left her? She reproached herself for a neglect of duty, and yet in that moment of ecstasy the world and all others in it had been forgotten, and then—he was gone.

Demas slept later than he intended to that morning, slept to triumphant and stimulating dreams, which ended



## FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

in the pealing of bells. He opened his eyes on the new day with a smile of confidence. He was ready. Again the bells sounded, and his smile broadened. His peal of bells had been his room telephone. It was Beatrice's voice that bade him good-morning.

"Please come to see me this morning, Demas, before you go any place else, or do anything else," she urged earnestly.

"Is anything the matter?"

"Nothing, only I want to see you."

"You haven't seen—" He stopped, but she understood.

"Oh, no, no! Not at all. I haven't seen anybody. But you will come, won't you?"

"Of course, I'll be there in about an hour."

There was relief in her smile when



## THE END OF DREAMS

she greeted his coming, but there was apprehension in her heart at the thought of his going. Her insistent fears moved her to speak at once.

“Demas,” she asked, “what are you going to do?”

“Do?”

“Yes; you said last night, you know, that—”

“Oh, that?” He answered cheerfully, for there was no fear in his heart. “I’m just going to put an end to all those doubts and distresses, and”—he took her hands in his—“arrange as well as I may for a future that will be tranquil and happy for us, dear.”

“You are going to find that man?” Her upturned earnest eyes were filled with the light of anxious love.

There could be no evasion.

“I had not meant you to know till



FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

afterward," he said, "but—yes, I am going to see him."

"Don't, Demas," she pleaded. "Please don't."

"I must, Beatie. It is all to be—settled to-day. This time has been coming for years. It's here now, and—I must."

Her arms went up around his neck, and her face was buried on his breast.

"Oh, Demas, Demas," she half sobbed, "I'm afraid!"

He held her close to him, and spoke soothingly, and with a confidence that must carry conviction.

"You need not be afraid, Beatie," he said. "I do not believe there is any danger. I will come back to you this evening for—your answer."

Her arms tightened about him.

"You've had my answer, Demas,"



## THE END OF DREAMS

she said. "I love you so much that I am afraid for you all the time you are away from me. Isn't there any other way so you won't have to go?"

"No, Beatie, I must go. Don't be afraid, and don't worry. I'll come back to you this evening, and everything will be all right. Good-by now, till this evening."

He kissed her again and again, and then putting her gently into a chair, left her sobbing, with anxious eyes turned on the door that closed behind him.

The storm had lowered almost to the breaking point when Demas arrived in One-Eyed John's cab in front of Dutch Heinie's house. As he stepped to the ground there was a long roll of thunder, and, as it seemed, out of the very



## FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

end of it his ear caught the snorting of an automobile driven rapidly up the road. Hardly had he turned in the direction of the sound when the car shot out from the group of roadside trees, and a moment later came to a stop beside his cab.

"Beatie!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes, Demas," she cried, as she sprang out of the car. "I couldn't help it. I had to come."

"I don't s'pose, Mr. Dayre, that this really is the kind o' junket to bring a lady on," said Detective Holtsclaw, who stepped out of the car after her; "but there wasn't nothin' else to it. She said you'd gone to git that other bloke, an' that she'd show me the way if I'd hurry along in a buzz wagon."

"You must go back, Beatie," said Demas. "This is no place for you."



## THE END OF DREAMS

Surely you understand that. Holts-claw will take you right home."

"No, Demas, I must stay. I must be there when—"

"An' besides," exclaimed Holts-claw, "the storm's on us."

With a dash the long threatening clouds broke, and the rain came in torrents.

"Come, then," said Demas, and taking Beatie's hand, they ran for the house.

When he threw open the front door and they rushed in, they found Heinie and Lena in the lower hallway, not in a threatening attitude, as Demas more than half expected, but almost speechless with awe at the course events were taking.

"Where is he?" asked Demas, quietly.



FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

"Ubp stairs," answered Heinie, mechanically.

Demas turned and walked up the steps deliberately and calmly, followed by the others.

In the hall above stood Vashti Garwood, pale and trembling.

"You said you would come alone and unarmed!" she exclaimed, scornfully.

"And here you bring—"

"He did come alone!" cried Beatrice, passionately. "We only overtook him at the gate by coming in a motor. He did not know—"

"Never mind, Beatrice," he said, soothingly. Then he turned to Vashti. "I will keep my word. I will meet him alone and unarmed. Where is he?"

She did not answer.

"He is in the house still?"



## THE END OF DREAMS

Still she remained silent.

For a moment he stood and looked at her.

"It is useless," he said. "You might as well tell me, for I have come here to find him, and I will find him."

"Then find him!" she exclaimed defiantly.

"If he's any place," said Holtsclaw, "he's in that space between them two bedrooms, 'cause he's in neither one of 'em, and he's not in the big front room. I've looked. That space ain't accounted for, an' you bet he's there!"

Vashti's face became chalky at his words, and she leaned against the wall for support.

"What is that space?" Demas asked her.

Her fear had grown sullen, after her defiance, and she did not answer.



FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

"I know!" exclaimed Beatrice. "It is a small unfurnished room like a dressing room with a door into it from each of the bedrooms."

"Are there windows in it?"

"Only three little round ones not bigger than port holes high up in the wall."

"Go into the other bedroom, Holts-claw, and stop him if he attempts to get out that way, and I'll go in through this door."

He walked into the bedroom where Beatrice had spent that drugged night, and the others followed. Straight to the door of the dressing room he went and tried it. It gave to his hand. With a quick movement he opened it, stepped inside and closed it behind him.

As the latch of the door clicked into its place, there was a blinding flash of



## THE END OF DREAMS

lightning that seemed to fill the room with blue flame, followed by a cannonade of thunder that jarred the house to its foundations. With a scream Vashti sank in a huddled heap on the floor, but Beatrice, with her eyes on the door where Demas had disappeared, hardly flinched, though her breast rose and fell with the deep breaths of extreme excitement.

Then before the echoes of the thunder had entirely died away, a gleam of sunshine streamed through the window, and Demas's voice was heard behind the closed door.

"Open the doors!" he called.

In an instant Beatrice's hand was on the knob. As she threw open the door, the one opposite was opened by Holts-claw, and between them stood Demas Dayre—her Demas!—calm, but with



FACE TO FACE AND EYE TO EYE

the light of triumph in his face—and  
*alone!*

She sprang toward him with a cry of relief and delight, and he caught her closely in his arms. Then raising his eyes, and speaking, as it seemed to himself, he said:

“It is the end of dreams.”

“But Demie—the other one?” cried Vashti, as, with staring eyes, she struggled to her feet.

“I am”—Demas seemed to hesitate for a word—“both.”



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE BETTER PART

FOR twenty minutes One-Eyed John's cab made its way cityward at the ordinary jog trot of the lean, thin-limbed bay, without a word being spoken by either of the occupants. Beatrice, dazed beyond speech by what had happened, and silent, too, from the nervous reaction of a consciousness of danger past, stared unseeingly at the slowly passing landscape. But a feeling of comfort and security fostered by the arm which Demas still held closely around her enabled her gradually to recover something of her poise, and finally she raised her head from his shoulder and looked up into his face.



## THE BETTER PART

His eyes met hers with a smiling confidence that was reassuring, and he bent his head down and kissed her.

"It's all right now, Beatie, little girl," he said.

The long sigh she gave spoke of the tension that had passed. For a few moments longer she remained silent; then she looked up at him again.

"Demas," she said, "you can tell me now, can't you, dear?"

"I'm not sure that I can so it will be clear; but—" He hesitated.

"I'll understand, I'm sure I'll understand."

"It began a long time ago—at college. Maybe the college spirit had something to do with it—that's the usual excuse. In those days I wasn't exactly a mild and well-behaved young man. I don't suppose you realized



## THE END OF DREAMS

that, because I was always at my best with you. I had to be so when I was with you because you made me so. But I rebelled against authority often, and when there was a college scrape I was generally mixed up in it. Then I got hit on the head with the ball. When I recovered all the rebelliousness was gone from me, and I had no desire for anything but the quiet and conventional.

“But with the change came dreams in which I saw myself worse than I had ever been, not only defying authority, but defying the law, and sometimes actually committing crimes. The horror of the thing grew on me until I wanted to get away from everybody. It may sound foolish now, Beatie, but I was afraid I might become what I dreamed myself to be.



## THE BETTER PART

“The dreams grew in frequency and horror until my arrest for robbing your home confirmed the suspicion I had had a good while—that I really had another self that existed independently of me. Then I came to you again, and felt all the strength of your old influence for the good. From that time the dreams were no longer horrible. I knew that I should win, that I should conquer the other self, that the viciousness which made that other self possible was weakening, and that whatever was good in it would return to me, and the evil—disappear. It was only a question of meeting face to face that other being which lived on the worst of me. The dreams told me that; and I knew, I felt that they told him. That is the reason I sought him and he avoided me. That is the reason he sought you, and



## THE END OF DREAMS

loved you—for I know he did love you. But it was that very love which weakened him and strengthened me—the love of you; for you only loved what was best in me, and the best in me was always trying to live up to and be worthy of your love.

“The final effort of that other self to assert itself was when he fired on me from the window, and his final failure came when you knocked him senseless. After that I think he knew, and was merely waiting for the end.”

“But what happened in the room?” And even at the thought of that fearful moment the scared look came into her eyes.

“I don’t know. When I closed the door behind me I found myself face to face with what might have been myself only apparently failing and fading





MY OTHER SELF HAD DISAPPEARED IN THE FLASH.







## THE BETTER PART

very rapidly. Then came that blinding flash of lightning, and, for a moment, I thought I had been struck. I knew I had not, though, when I heard the roar and roll of the thunder. For a moment I was blinded, and my whole body was racked by some unexplainable shock. When I opened my eyes I was alone, and I knew that what I had expected had happened. The evil had weakened until it could no longer maintain itself in a separate existence, and withhold such good as it had from me. My other self had disappeared in the flash, and I was once more master of all that was Demas Dayre."

She asked no further question; her faith was too strong for that, and her own experience too vivid; but laid her head once more on his shoulder with another sigh.



## THE END OF DREAMS

"I'm glad it is all over, Demas," she said.

Happiness requires few words, and little or nothing was said by either until they were once more at home. Then, as they stood there alone in the room where he had first met her again after those ten wasted years, he took her hands gently in his.

"I know it isn't evening yet," he said, smiling; "and maybe I shouldn't be so impatient; but I should like very much to have my answer now."

Her arms went up around his neck, and pulling his head down she kissed him.

"Yes," she said, "if you'll promise always to be my Demas."















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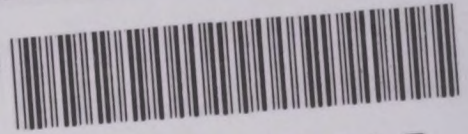


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